

THE INDIANS AND THE OKI



A. TEMPLETON MITCHELL





Harriet Boyer

Los Angeles

California

to D Ted Jackson

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Scandawatti and Achille.



THE INDIANS AND THE OKI

*A Story of Old France in the
New World*

BY
A. TEMPLETON MITCHELL



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The Indians and the Oki

CHAPTER I

LITTLE RED SAVAGE MEETS LITTLE WHITE SAVAGE

A LITTLE red savage darted out from one of the bark houses of the Onondaga village, and disappeared among the trees that bordered the cluster of Indian dwellings.

The boy was well formed and tall for his age. Though dark, his skin had a ruddy tint, while his eyes were large and brown. His Indian name was Scandawatti. This name had been given him with many important ceremonies, for it was the name of an ancestor who had won renown as a warrior and a statesman. Little Red Savage was the name given him by an English trader who was visiting in the village on the day the boy was born. This boy's family had given many chiefs to the tribe, and on the death of the present chief, his uncle, Chief Illiol, Scandawatti himself would become chief of the Onondagas. He was not yet old enough to be a warrior, so he was not permitted to carry a gun. His only weapon was his bow

and arrows. Of the latter, his quiver was full, and he could shoot them wonderfully straight.

Just at this time the trees were green with summer, and Scandawatti felt as free and happy as the birds that skimmed through the air above his head. His slender feet scarcely touched the ground as he hurried through the paths in the strip of forest which bordered the Indian village.

Within the forest was a valley, and in the center of it lay a small lake. Several kinds of waterfowl could be seen in the vicinity, some running along the shore, others diving in the lake's clear water, others flying above it.

When Scandawatti left the forest, his progress toward the lake was marked by the waving of the grass through which he crawled. He wanted to bag some of the wildfowl for his dinner, so he approached quietly. The boy's presence was not suspected by the birds until an arrow from his bow pierced one of them, and the dead bird dropped among the rushes of the swampy shore. Then there was a sudden whir of wings, and the startled birds rose into the air. Again an arrow flew from Scandawatti's bow.

The cries of the frightened birds had roused an immense bear that lay concealed in the thicket, and its huge form now rose above the bushes, just in time to receive the arrow intended for the flying waterfowl. The arrow struck the bear in the shoulder, but as

the animal's hide was thick it made only a slight wound. The bear angrily bit at the wound, then caught the arrow in its teeth and drew it out. Its little eyes, rimmed with red, sparkled with anger. Quick as a flash it turned to look for its assailant.

The bear was a big black fellow, and as its jaws were still red with blood from a killing it had made that morning, Little Red Savage at once took to his heels when he heard it roar. The sharp stinging pain in its shoulder, where the arrow had entered, made the bear furious. Scandawatti could hear the monster snapping and growling as it crashed through the bushes in pursuit of him.

Scandawatti well knew that the bear could easily overtake him before he could reach the Indian village, as that lay at some distance. At once he began to look about for some means of escape. There were no caves to hide in, and there were no trees near; there was only a jungle of underbrush. Beyond the thickets towered a rocky cliff, and toward this Little Red Savage now began crawling on his hands and knees. He made his way to the foot of the cliff, crawled along its base, and quickly discovered that it was too steep for him to climb. Looking for a foothold, he hurried along until he came to an outcropping of slate which was broken into irregular steps. He scrambled up from step to step until he came to a sheer wall of rock. Then he threw himself toward the face of the steep ledge and

caught the sharp edge. He hung for a moment, then fell back.

Scandawatti could still hear the bear's heavy body crashing through the underbrush. Frightened, he again sprang upward, clung with both hands, and dug his toes into the cracks of the rock. For a moment he pushed and strained with all his strength. Then, breathless and panting, he lifted his body until his knees rested on a jutting ledge, drew himself up to the top of the cliff, and lay quiet. Now his breath came in gasps, for beneath him he could hear the crackling of the bushes and the growls of the angry bear. Before he could get strength to run further, the bear crashed through the undergrowth and made for the cliff.

Scandawatti was sure the bear could climb the cliff, and he knew he had a chance to escape only if the animal had not seen him. He rolled over, then jumped to his feet and started to run. When he had gone some distance from the edge of the cliff he looked back. He could not see the bear's body, but he saw its immense claws clutching the edge of the rock. While he was looking, the bear's head rose above the ledge. The bear peered over at him. It was on his trail! There was nothing to do but run, and run he did.

Clawing, heaving, struggling, the bear scrambled up the steep cliff and stood for a moment sniffing the air. It caught a glimpse of Little Red Savage dodging around a boulder, and started after him in hot pursuit.

There was no question as to which could run the faster, Scandawatti or the bear. The bear took such long leaps that it fairly ate up the distance between itself and the fleeing redskin.

Scandawatti jumped nimbly over rocks and dodged around boulders, all the while hoping to throw the bear off his trail. Barely had he crept around a great boulder, when the big bear was at his heels. The boy considered himself all but caught, and he knew that if he were caught, he would instantly be torn to pieces.

At that instant the bear stood on its hind legs and reached for him with its powerful black paws. By darting to one side Scandawatti escaped the clutch of the great claws. He was a brave little fellow, but when he thought of the bear's sharp claws tearing his flesh he grew faint with fear.

The Indian boy now looked on all sides for a hiding place. At no great distance two big rocks stood side by side. He saw that they didn't quite touch, and that the space between them was big enough to admit his slender body. Scandawatti knew that if he could only reach those rocks he would be safe, for the big bear couldn't squeeze its body through such a narrow opening. With a last despairing effort the boy darted forward, stumbled, and fell headlong. He was sure now that there was no longer any hope of escape from the clutch of those great claws. He cried aloud to the

Great Spirit for help. His answer was a sharp crack that sounded as loud as thunder in the ears of Little Red Savage.

It was not a clap of thunder that he heard, though. It was the shot of a pistol, discharged at close range. At the report the bear toppled over. With roars of rage and pain, it tried to get to its feet. Then the pistol cracked again, the bullet pierced the bear's heart, and the ugly brute fell over dead.

Little Red Savage jumped to his feet and at the same moment he came face to face with Little White Savage. The two boys stared at each other wonderingly. They looked so much alike that they might have been brothers. Little White Savage was not so tall as Scandawatti, however, and, besides, his eyes were of a softer hue. He was just as well built, though, and every bit as well formed.

Both boys were naked except for their moccasins and a strip of cloth bound around the hips. Scandawatti's straight black hair was held back by a band of doeskin embroidered with porcupine quills, but the long, black hair of Little White Savage hung down loosely on both sides of his face. His skin was somewhat lighter in color than that of Little Red Savage. He was just as fearless in bearing, though, as was the Indian boy, and he held a smoking silver-mounted pistol in his hand.

Scandawatti stepped close to the white boy, and

placing his hand on the latter's shoulder, said, "You are of the French nation?"

"Yes."

"I thank you for saving my life. By what name are you called in the lodges of your people?"

"Achille de Casson."

The two brave little fellows looked each other in the face as steadily and gravely as if they had been grown men. Again Scandawatti spoke.

"My brother, you have come from the far North. When will your journey end?"

"When I reach the village of the Onondagas. I come with a party of French woodrangers."

"Look!" cried Scandawatti, as he threw himself flat on the ground and pointed to the right. There, at some distance, a plumed and painted warrior stood sharply outlined against the sky.

"Listen, my brother," the Indian boy whispered. "That warrior is Black Eagle, a treacherous Iroquois. He hates my people, the Onondagas, because he was expelled from the tribe. He has heard your shots. In a short time he will be here, then he and his followers will take you prisoner. I will hide. Later I will follow on your trail and help you escape."

Little Red Savage was catlike in his movements as he crept along the ground and hid behind an immense boulder.

Alone, Little White Savage stood beside the dead

bear, and in grim silence bravely faced Black Eagle and his band when they swooped down on him.

Black Eagle sprang at Achille. Towering over him like a giant, he took hold of his little captive. The big Indian was an evil-looking savage. His little black eyes snapped with delight when he saw the pistol in Achille's hand. He jerked it away, and, after examining it carefully, stuck it in the belt of buckskin that encircled his waist.

"Come!" Without giving Little White Savage time to obey his command, he took hold of the boy's long hair and dragged him from the spot. Achille felt sure his scalp would be torn from his head as he was jerked along at the heels of the brutal savage.

Suddenly Black Eagle stopped. For a moment he listened intently to the shouts of the sentinels whom he had left at the brow of the hill, then turned to his followers and said: "A herd of buffaloes is coming down the valley." With those words he motioned to two of his braves. "Come. Let us tie our captive," he said, and pointed to a tree a short distance away.

The three Indians bound the feet and hands of Little White Savage, then tied him to the tree and hurried off. They felt sure there was now no way in which he could escape.

Scandawatti, who was humped behind the big rock, looked just like a great cat crouched for a spring. He had seen all that had happened, and so soon as Black

Eagle and his followers had left their prisoner, he scurried from his hiding place. With quick and nimble fingers he unloosed Achille. He then took the French boy's hand, and said: "Come, my brother, I shall lead you to the village of my people. It is not far away. There we shall be safe from Black Eagle and his followers."

The two boys took to their heels and were soon standing on top of the cliff. From that point they looked down the valley, and there, many miles away, they saw a mass of brown bodies which they knew to be buffaloes. At once they turned and wandered along the cliff until they came to the place where the rock formation ended and the ground sloped down to the plain. They began to run, and presently their feet caught in a vine. Clutching each other they came tumbling and bumping down the hill, and landed, breathless and huddled together, at the bottom.

Just then they heard a rustling in the underbrush. Looking around, they saw Black Eagle and his band coming toward them. The two boys whispered and muttered to each other, afraid the sound of their voices might be carried to the Indian braves, who were walking swiftly along the trail. They crouched in the high grass, then pressed their slender, dark bodies close to the ground. Sheltered by a hummock of earth, they escaped the notice of the warriors, who walked in single file, each stepping carefully into the other's footprints.

As the boys rose to their feet they heard the sound of voices that seemed to come from the near-by thicket. They stood motionless and listened.

"Come!" cried Achille joyfully. "Here are my friends." He hurried forward, Scandawatti following close at his heels.

With feet encased in moccasins, the boys walked so lightly that they made no noise. When they were close to the thicket they pushed aside some low-hanging branches and peered through. There, seated on the ground in front of them, were some French woodrangers. Such men were great Indian fighters. The French called them *coureurs de bois*.

One of the most noted leaders of the woodrangers was Sieur Du Lhut. He was in command of these men. They had been sent to make a treaty of peace between the French and the Onondagas, who then had their home in the northeastern part of what is now New York state. They were bringing presents to the chief men of the tribe from the French governor of Canada. As the boys crouched in the thicket, Du Lhut was saying, "Mon Dieu! my friends, what has become of my little cousin, Achille de Casson? I think, Antoine," he said, as he turned to one of the woodrangers, "you named him well when you called him Little White Savage. He loves to roam the woods. It is a good thing he can speak the language of the Onondagas, for he may fall into the hands of some of that tribe."

"I heard him say that some day he was going to hunt grizzlies. Perhaps this is the day he has selected for his hunt," answered Antoine.

At this there were shouts of laughter from the woodrangers. The thought of Little White Savage on the hunt for a big grizzly bear amused the merry-hearted *coureurs de bois*.

Just then Achille grasped Scandawatti's hand and pulled him around the edge of the thicket.

Catching sight of the children, Du Lhut jumped to his feet. "Heaven be thanked!" he cried. "And who is your friend?" He looked curiously at Little Red Savage, who came forward with all the dignity of a warrior.

"I am Scandawatti, nephew of Chief Illiol of the Onondagas. This, my brother," he took Achille's hand and faced the crowd of dark-skinned Frenchmen, "saved me from death, from the claws of a bear."

"From a bear?" cried Du Lhut.

With a puzzled air the crowd of woodrangers glanced from Little Red Savage to Little White Savage, as, with dignity, Scandawatti told the story of his narrow escape from death.

"But where is your pistol?" demanded Du Lhut, turning to Achille.

"Black Eagle took it from me." And Achille then told how Black Eagle caught and bound him, and how he was later released by Scandawatti.

"Well, I believe I shall take you both for my body-guard," Du Lhut said jestingly. "At any rate, neither of you belongs to a race of cowards."

Du Lhut embraced his little cousin. Then, opening a pack at his side, he drew out two silver-mounted pistols, and handed one to each of the boys. "These are a present from me. So long as you keep them I will give you all the powder and lead you want."

Scandawatti could hardly believe it was true. To have a pistol of his own! And such a beautiful weapon, too! His eyes sparkled with joy, as, in a few words, he thanked Du Lhut. Achille danced and capered and shouted with glee.

Du Lhut turned to a big trapper at his side, and lowering his voice so that his words might not reach the ears of Little Red Savage, said: "Antoine, take some of your men and strip off the hide of that bear. My little cousin has done us a good turn by saving the life of the Onondaga. This Indian boy is the nephew of Chief Illiol, whom I know, and whose influence among the different tribes of the Iroquois is very great."





CHAPTER II

RED DEER AND GREAT BEAR COVET THE WEAPONS OF ACHILLE AND SCANDAWATTI

THE Iroquois of whom Du Lhut spoke were a great and powerful nation of fierce and war-like Indians who dwelt chiefly within the region now included in New York State. Better known as the Iroquois League, the nation included five tribes, the Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Onondagas, the Cayugas, and the Senecas. Although most of their permanent villages lay about the headwaters of the Hudson River, directly between the French settlements along the St. Lawrence and the English colonies of the Atlantic coast, the Iroquois ranged in every direction over great stretches of country, either on hunting expeditions or on war parties. Each tribe of the Iroquois League claimed the right to hunt in certain regions. There they built lodges of bark which stood from one year to another. Every spring nearly all the members of a tribe—men, women, and children—set out for the hunting village, to remain there until autumn winds reminded them that they should return to their long-house villages.

Du Lhut was in high good humor as he guided his little band toward the hunting village of the Onondagas. The two boys led the way, Scandawatti in front and Achille close on his heels. Antoine, carrying the hide of the big black bear, brought up the rear.

Du Lhut and his companions had been seen as they skirted the little lake, so that when they reached the village they found the chief of the tribe and the principal warriors, resplendent in paint and feathers, waiting to receive them.

At the very moment of their arrival, while the dignified warriors were greeting the Frenchmen, Little Red Savage had darted to the side of Chief Illiol. Pointing to the hide of the bear, he said, "That skin was torn from a big bear. He was close on my heels and would have killed me, but that boy, who is of the French nation, shot and killed him." "This," he added, showing the pistol, "is a present from The Great White Chief." And Du Lhut, who had seen all this, knew from the gleam which lighted up the eyes of the Indian chief that he would have on his side at least one of the leading warriors of the Iroquois.

The Indians led Du Lhut and his companions to the council chamber, and having given the Frenchmen seats of honor, passed the peace pipe. Du Lhut's heart was heavy as he looked around that circle of plumed and painted warriors. Although the lives of hundreds of French settlers depended upon peace being made with

the Iroquois, it was impossible to read the faces of these fierce warriors, who were as bloodthirsty as tigers. Some of these warriors were statesmen, in cunning and diplomacy more than a match for the statesmen of France and England.

Since Indian children were not allowed to be present at the councils of the tribe, Scandawatti and Achille were left standing by themselves when the braves led their white guests to the council chamber. The boys were at once surrounded by a crowd of excited children.

"Who killed the bear?" exclaimed a big boy named Red Deer, as he pointed to the skin which the squaws were dragging away to cure.

"This, my brother," said Little Red Savage, putting his hand on the shoulder of Little White Savage, and looking proudly into the face of Red Deer, who, by the way, hated Scandawatti thoroughly.

"Whose is that?" asked Red Deer, catching sight of Scandawatti's pistol.

"Mine."

"It will be taken away from you and given to a brave. Children," he said scornfully, "are not to own guns when there are not enough firearms for the warriors of the tribe."

"No one will take from me the gift of The Great White Chief, unless," Scandawatti said, with flashing eyes, "unless it is stolen from me. We sometimes have thieves among us."

The meaning look that accompanied this last remark seemed to rouse all the fierceness of Red Deer's nature. He sprang at Scandawatti with the quickness of a wild cat and clutched his throat.

Achille, who had been trained to box by an Englishman held prisoner in Quebec, instantly hurled himself at Red Deer and delivered such telling blows that the other quickly loosened his hold on Scandawatti. Red Deer slunk away amidst the yells of the children.

Red Deer was hated by all. He was a younger brother of Black Eagle, who had taken Achille captive. Black Eagle had been expelled from the tribe, because, when taken prisoner by the Hurons, he had betrayed the hiding place of his companions. Despite his treachery, the Onondagas, with great bravery and cunning, had fought their way to safety. Black Eagle was now roving the forests and plains at the head of a band of renegade Indians, all outcasts from this and other Iroquois tribes. No treaties made between the French and Iroquois would hold good with the outcast Indians. They dared not attack any of the Iroquois openly, but they boldly murdered lone hunters and trappers of any tribe or nation.

The shadow of Black Eagle's disgrace rested on his brother Red Deer, who was by nature a bad-tempered Indian. He was suspected of being a thief, and had been openly accused of stealing. Besides, he was so selfish and greedy that no one could like him.

As a race, the Indians were generous and unselfish with one another. They shared all the game that was brought in, and in times of famine, if one starved, all starved. Red Deer, however, had been known to snatch their share of food from the hands of younger boys, and, while gobbling it up, to jeer at the little red-skins because they were not big enough to defend their rights. Now some of these little ones danced and shrieked with delight when they saw Little White Savage pummeling their old enemy.

Red Deer's temper was not improved by the beating he received, and his heart was filled with hate for Scandawatti and Achille. As he skulked among the trees that bordered the village, he wondered how he could safely get his revenge.

Several times he had tried to convince the warriors of the tribe that he was old enough to carry a gun, but always they had refused to listen to him. Firearms were scarce, and as each warrior possessed only one, Red Deer had been told that he would have to hunt and trap in order to earn one. And now, to see Scandawatti with that beautiful weapon! It was too much. The more so since Red Deer knew that Scandawatti would be permitted to keep it. For among the Onondagas, as among the other Iroquois, it was rare that anyone took what belonged to another. They had respect for the rights of property.

As Red Deer walked along, his heart filled with

hate, he stumbled and fell headlong over a moccasined foot thrust out to trip him. He turned angrily, his fist raised to strike, but when he saw it was Great Bear, the only one among the little redskins who was friendly to him, he let his hand fall, and threw himself down beside him in the shade of some bushes. Here he had found a comrade willing to share his hate.

"The Great White Chief who came today gave Scandawatti a pistol," began Red Deer moodily.

"A pistol? One would think he were already chief of the Onondagas," Great Bear said angrily.

"I hate him," muttered Red Deer. "I sometimes think his arrows are bewitched, they fly so straight. He beat me yesterday, when we were shooting at a mark. I wish he would lose that pistol." And Red Deer bent a gloomy look on his friend.

"Yes, I too wish he would lose it. But he will not lose it," Great Bear said decidedly. "He will carry it all day, and at night—well, at night I suppose he will put it in a safe place."

Red Deer started up, then threw himself down, his lips close to his friend's ear. "Yes—at night—where do you think he will hide it?"

"Oh, I don't know," replied Great Bear. "Near at hand, I suppose. But why?" he asked curiously.

"Because he hasn't any right to it, and if I could, I would take it from him. You and I are much older, yet we are not allowed to own guns. It is only because

Scandawatti is a nephew of Chief Illiol, and will some day be chief, that he is favored."

"He is not yet chief," Great Bear said angrily. "I wish someone would kill him."

"We can't kill him," Red Deer whispered, "but we can take away his pistol, and that of his friend, too. Then each of us will have one."

"But how?" questioned Great Bear. "We mustn't be caught, or we'll be punished."

"Never fear. We won't be caught. I'll fix on some plan for tonight. After everyone has feasted, all will sleep heavily. Let us sleep now so we can keep awake tonight." And soon Red Deer and Great Bear were sleeping soundly, despite the yelling and laughter of the children who were romping about the village in high glee at the presence of the white trappers.

Meanwhile the conference between the Onondaga braves and the Frenchmen had come to a satisfactory conclusion, and a treaty of peace had been arranged between them. Great preparations were just now being made for the feast to be held that night. Every kettle in the village was called into use. Down the center of the long bark house in which the feast was to be held many bright fires were gleaming, and over these swung kettles filled with different kinds of meat.

Though very young, Little White Savage was allowed to feast with the warriors because he was a visitor. And because of the events of the day, Chief

Illiol couldn't refuse Achille's request that Little Red Savage be allowed to sit with him.

Each warrior who came to the feast brought his own bowl and spoon, took his proper place, and solemnly awaited his turn to be helped. The braves of the tribe were helped first, and the squaws were busily employed seeing that everyone was given food. Achille sniffed the air as he tried to decide which kettle contained the most savory stew. He knew that there was buffalo meat in one, venison in another, and that still others contained turkeys, ducks, and such wildfowl. There was one not far from him, however, which sent forth a very appetizing odor. He was quite pleased to observe that the squaw who waited on him filled his bowl from that kettle.

Half starved, the two boys bent over their bowls of steaming broth and gorged themselves. From time to time a squaw good-naturedly filled their bowls, until finally Achille shook his head just as she was about to help him again. "It was very, very good," he repeated with a sigh of content. He didn't know that the stew he had enjoyed so much was made from a big white dog, killed that morning to provide this delicacy for the feast.

After the feast came the dance. Many of the young braves took part in it. Half naked, their bodies striped with paint, now singing, now whooping of their victories, the warriors danced in circles around a pole.

The village was made light as day by the huge fires, fed with wood from the adjoining forest. The squaws had piled this wood at a convenient distance so that the fires could be easily replenished. These fires were not allowed to die down, but were carefully tended so that great tongues of flame shot up into the air and cast a ruddy light on the crowds of men, women and children who thronged the open spaces of the village.

As the singers took up the stirring war song, the drums beat with monotonous rhythm. The feet of the big-muscled Indians struck the ground in unison, keeping time to the thud of the tom-toms. The braves leaped and shouted. Their knee rattles jingled as they moved, and they shook their tortoise-shell rattles as an accompaniment to their wild screaming. There was power in the faces of these plumed warriors as they danced back and forth in the glare of the leaping flames. Bending and swaying, they went through all the motions of attack and defense. By loud whoops and shrill yells they gave vent to their wild passions.

Little White Savage pushed to the front of the crowd that surrounded the dancers, his gaze fixed on the whirling redskins. His eyes widened as the leaping figures thrust and stabbed, or brought down their tomahawks with crushing force on imaginary foes. He was glad the Iroquois were now friends of the French, and not enemies.

Little Red Savage seemed to be watching the dancers

too closely to observe Red Deer and Great Bear, who were standing opposite him in the circle of spectators. With scowls on their faces they were watching every movement of Achille and Little Red Savage. But Scandawatti was too alert not to see the envy in the glances they cast at the silver-mounted pistol which he proudly wore at his side. As he saw them whispering together, he knew they were planning some mischief. His suspicions were further aroused by the dark looks they cast on him when they turned to leave the circle about the dancing warriors.

When Scandawatti saw them push their way out of the crowd, he whispered a few words to Achille and then made his way to the outer edge of the circle. Shielded by the body of a big warrior, he saw Red Deer and Great Bear glide behind the bark house which belonged to Chief Illiol, and which served him, his wife, and his nephew Scandawatti as a home. So soon as Red Deer and Great Bear were out of sight, Scandawatti ran to his uncle's lodge, slipped inside, and concealed himself behind a great roll of furs.

Soon the heads of Red Deer and Great Bear appeared at an opening at the back of the lodge. As the Indian lodges had no chimneys, such openings were made to allow the smoke to escape. The two young Indians seemed to be taking careful note of the positions of the sleeping platforms which were used instead of beds. While they were looking searchingly about,

they talked in low tones; then they jumped down and hurried away.

Scandawatti listened while the sound of their footsteps grew fainter and fainter. Then he slipped out of the house, crossed the street, and joined a group of his companions. He was taking part in a game with some of them when Red Deer and Great Bear hurried by. Scandawatti waited until they had passed, then hastened through the crowd, and stood at the side of Little White Savage.

"Come," he whispered. "I have something to tell you." When they were clear of the crowd, he said, "I believe that Red Deer and Great Bear will try to steal our pistols."

"When? Tonight?"

"I don't know, but I just now caught them spying about my uncle's lodge."

"Can't we find some way to frighten them, so they will stay away from there?" asked Achille.

"It will not be easy to do," said Scandawatti. "You know they are older than we are."

The two friends seated themselves at the foot of a big tree. The dancing was over, and the redskins—men, women and children—were seeking the shelter of their bark houses. Some young braves passed, singing. The song was addressed to the Great Spirit, and as they sang they raised their faces to the starlit sky. The fires had now died down to a dull glare and

the shadows were heavy at the edge of the wood. There was a rustling which caused the two boys to turn just in time to catch a glimpse of a stalwart warrior as he plunged through the thicket into the forest path, and made his way out of the village.

Little Red Savage grasped the arm of Little White Savage and gave it a warning pressure. There was an expression of awe on his face. Achille turned to him with a questioning look.

"He is of the Clan of the False Faces," whispered Scandawatti.

"The Clan of the False Faces? What do you mean?"

"There are secret ceremonies connected with it. The head of the clan is a woman. At their meetings they all wear false faces. It is a powerful order and it is to be feared."

"Why is it to be feared?"

"Because of the power of the false faces. They are okies," Scandawatti explained, as he saw the puzzled look on the face of Little White Savage.

"Okies?" repeated Achille, "I thought okies were spirits."

"They are. The false faces only appear to be faces—hollow and without bodies—but really they are spirits; only the faces show. Although the faces are all one can see, they are really powerful manitous. Some of our very old warriors have at times seen false

faces flitting through the forest. They float through the air at about the height of a man. It is indeed very dangerous to meet one."

"Would it frighten you to see one floating through the air?" asked Little White Savage curiously.

"Yes, because no one knows whether they are bad okies or good okies. They are not all alike. Some okies are good spirits and some are bad spirits. We all have okies that keep guard over us," continued Scandawatti seriously. "My oki brought you in time to shoot the bear."

"We call them guardian angels," said Achille.

The boys heard footsteps just at that moment, so they pressed closer to the tree trunk. Then they cautiously peeped from behind the tree to see Red Deer and Great Bear walking slowly through the village. Their heads were close together and they were talking earnestly.

"Come," exclaimed Little White Savage, jumping to his feet. "I have thought of a way to frighten Red Deer and Great Bear. But first I must go see my cousin Du Lhut."

They hastened to one of the largest lodges in the village, within which Frenchmen and Indians sat in a circle smoking their pipes. Chief Illiol, who was seated by the side of Du Lhut, smiled when he saw the boys coming in, hand in hand.

"It is well that the hatchet is buried between the

red men and the palefaces. Take your white brother to my lodge," he said to Scandawatti.

"I will. He has come to speak to The Great White Chief."

Achille drew his cousin to one side.

"Have you distributed the presents you brought?"

"No. Why do you ask?"

"Because I put some things of my own in the middle of the pack, and I want to get them out."

"I will get them for you," said Du Lhut.

By the glare of a torch at the further end of the lodge, Du Lhut opened his pack and took from it a neatly rolled bundle which he handed to Achille. He also took from the pack a couple of gleaming knives with deerhorn handles.

"Some day we are going to hunt buffaloes, and then each of you will need a knife," he said. Then he laughed heartily at the eagerness with which the lads reached for the shining steel blades.

"Be careful! Don't cut yourselves. Here is your blanket, Achille; you will need it to wrap around you tonight."

Du Lhut embraced his little cousin and then began taking knives, hatchets, and trinkets of all kinds from the pack to distribute among the warriors.

The two boys darted out of the lodge and began walking rapidly toward the lower end of the village. Little Red Savage knew that this had been the most

wonderful day of his life. To be given a pistol, and then to receive this beautiful knife! Surely some good oki had watched over him all day long.

Except at the lower end, the village was now dark. There Red Deer and Great Bear had kindled a big blaze, having scraped together the embers of the dying fire and thrown on armfuls of dry wood. Hearing the footsteps of the two little savages, they turned and faced them just as Scandawatti drew his knife from its sheath to look at its shining blade. The firelight flamed on the steel blade, so that it glittered in the darkness.

"Where did you get that?" demanded Red Deer, stepping in front of Little Red Savage as though to block his way.

"From The Great White Chief," answered Scandawatti haughtily.

"Stand out of our way." As Little White Savage spoke, he took a step forward and put up his fists in a manner that forcibly reminded Red Deer of the drubbing he had received that very morning. Red Deer stepped back beside Great Bear, whose eyes flashed hate and jealousy. As Scandawatti and Achille turned toward the lodge of Chief Illiol, their pistols at their sides and their knives in their hands, Great Bear muttered threats.

"Why should Scandawatti receive as fine presents as the great warriors of the tribe?" he asked angrily.

"He has always been treated better than any of the rest of us," muttered Red Deer.

"This fire gives too much light for the work we want to do. Let us put it out." And Great Bear began to kick the flaming brands to one side.





CHAPTER III

THE FALSE FACE CHASES RED DEER AND GREAT BEAR

WHEN Scandawatti and Achille entered the lodge of Chief Illiol, a fire was blazing in the middle of the floor and cakes made of crushed corn were browning before the hot coals. The fur rugs which lay about the floor made comfortable resting places for the two boys. They ate their cakes and enjoyed the warmth and light.

"I told you I had thought of a way to frighten Red Deer and Great Bear," said Achille, as he began to unwrap his bundle. "Before I set out on this trip, I made plans to have some fun while I was away. I brought a false face with me! Here it is." And with that explanation to Scandawatti, Achille took a hideous false face from the bundle, and put it on. Scandawatti shrank back. He seemed really afraid of it.

Achille was glad the mask hid the smile which he couldn't quite repress. "Still, it is different with me," he thought. "If I believed this thing were a powerful *oki*, I, too, should be afraid of it."

"Look at it," said Achille, as he took off the false



“The arrow struck the bear in the shoulder.”

face and placed it in the hand of Little Red Savage, who could scarcely restrain his feeling of fear.

Scandawatti did look at it closely. To him it seemed a wonderful thing. The face was ghastly white, the cheeks and lips were a bright red. Reddish hair, which came down over the forehead, twisted and curled about the sides of the face.

“I wish I had a long stick,” said Achille, as he looked around at the walls on which hung bows and arrows and shields of deerhide.

Scandawatti stepped to a little nook in the wall and took from it a long slender stick. Achille carefully fastened the false face to a string, and then tied the string to the stick so that the false face dangled at the end.

“We can conceal ourselves in the branches of the tree just back of this lodge,” Achille whispered to Scandawatti. “Then, if Red Deer and Great Bear come near, we’ll swing this false face back and forth in front of them.”

Little Red Savage crouched in front of the fire, and a smile lighted his face. “It will frighten them, I know. It would frighten a great warrior. We will go to sleep first. They will not venture near here until the village is in slumber.”

The moon was high in the heavens when the boys stealthily slipped out of the bark house. They were wrapped in their blankets and their knives were in their

hands, but their precious pistols were safely hidden away. They slunk into the shadow of the tree that grew at the back of the lodge, then pulled themselves up into its branches and settled down for a period of patient waiting. They heard no sound except the chirping of the night birds and the squeaks of the tiny field mice that scurried among the dry leaves. Through the interlacing branches of the trees they could see the round white moon sailing across the sky. Surely, as they thought, this was a fine night for okies to be about.

Warned by a snapping twig, the boys crouched motionless, and from their hiding place in the foliage they saw Red Deer and Great Bear come from out the darkness, stand in the moonlight for a moment, then steal forward noiselessly.

Little White Savage stretched himself far out on one of the big limbs. He thrust the stick out clear of entangling twigs, and let the false face drop slowly down until it hung directly above the path along which the young redskins were advancing. He quivered with excitement as they came nearer and nearer. Now they were pausing only a few feet away.

As they moved forward again, Achille let out the string, which he had held looped in his hand, and the frightful looking false face seemed to jump right out of the darkness straight into the faces of Red Deer and Great Bear. With cries of fright they started back, jostling each other as they turned to flee.

The false face now bobbed up and down, for Achille was shaking with laughter.

Red Deer and Great Bear looked back just once. When they saw the false face apparently flitting about in the air, they concluded that the oki was indeed after them. Then, with muffled shrieks of fear, they fled into the black shadows of the big trees and ran fast as their legs could carry them.

Quick as a panther in his movements, Little White Savage dropped from the tree. He put on the false face and with catlike tread ran after the frightened boys, who stumbled along through the dark woods. They were now so scared that in imagination they could see false faces peering out at them from behind every tree.

Tired out, Red Deer and Great Bear cowered in the shadows of a thick-branched elm. Scarcely daring to breathe, they listened intently, but they heard only the tremulous cries of the night birds.

When Achille could no longer hear their footsteps, he became more cautious in his pursuit of the young redskins. With moccasined feet he slipped noiselessly through the weeds and leaves that lay in the shadows cast by stately elms and oaks. He stopped to listen, his body pressed against the broad trunk of a mighty tree. Then he overheard Red Deer and Great Bear talking in frightened whispers. They had caught sight of Agawayat, a sachem of the Onondagas who was

walking at the edge of the wood. "Don't let him see us," whispered Red Deer, "or he'll want to know what we're doing in the forest so late at night."

Just at that instant Little White Savage crouched for a spring. Then, with a fierce yell, he jumped at the two boys, straight out of the darkness. Red Deer and Great Bear thought they had seen an oki leaping toward them. In a fright, they took to their heels. They yelled with terror.

Hearing their cries, Agawayat ran toward them. As Achille bounded into the forest path, now faintly lighted by the rays of the moon, Agawayat had a good look at him. The wise old sachem was almost as startled as Red Deer and Great Bear had been. In spite of their fear of Agawayat, the two rascals were now anxious to place themselves under the protection of their sachem, and ran to meet him.

With a parting howl, Achille jumped back into the shadows of the forest, ran a short distance, stopped, and dropped to the ground. He burst out laughing as he saw the boys stumbling into trees and thickets and continually looking back to see if the oki were on their trail. When Red Deer and Great Bear heard his wild laughter, they thought it was the screaming of wood devils.

Scandawatti, who had been following at a distance, now came up. When he caught a glimpse of Agawayat he sank to the ground beside Achille. "We must hurry

back, my brother," he whispered. "Agawayat may go to consult with Chief Illiol about this matter. You know they are brothers."

So the boys at once hastened back to the lodge of Chief Illiol. Little White Savage chuckled, and so joyously that it made Little Red Savage laugh too. They reached Chief Illiol's lodge, slipped in, and had just crouched under their blankets when Agawayat entered. In a low tone he told Chief Illiol that the Oki of the False Faces had chased Red Deer and Great Bear. Then the sachem and the chief went out together, talking earnestly.

"Scandawatti," whispered Achille, "will you tell Chief Illiol and Agawayat about the way we scared Red Deer and Great Bear with the false face?" "No," answered Scandawatti. "They would be angry if they knew we had trifled with spirit mysteries."

"But there is no mystery about a false face," protested Achille.

Little Red Savage warningly laid a finger on Achille's lips. "We must be careful. The spirits may hear us. If we displease them, ill fortune will come on us. We are children, and know little of the spirit world; but great warriors, who have seen many wonderful things, know that false faces are mighty okies which have power to do good or evil. Let us not now talk further about the okies."

"Well, we'll say nothing about it if you think it best

not to," said Achille. "But let's slip outside. We may catch a glimpse of Red Deer and Great Bear."

The boys had just concealed themselves at the side of the long bark house when they heard someone approaching. As they peered from the shadows, they saw a priest. His head was covered and he wore a long black robe. He walked with downcast eyes and let his rosary slip slowly through his fingers as he said his prayers.

Little White Savage stepped from his hiding place and knelt at the good father's feet. The priest started back in alarm.

"My little one, how came you here?"

"I came with my Cousin Du Lhut."

The priest seemed displeased. "It will be hard enough for the men to escape, without being burdened with this child," he muttered.

Then Little Red Savage stepped from the shadows. The priest extended his hand in blessing. "Good night, my children," he said kindly. "It is growing late, and you must get some sleep." He watched them until they entered Chief Illiol's lodge, then turned and disappeared into the woods.





CHAPTER IV

BLACK EAGLE AND THE CLAN OF THE BEAR TAKE UP THE HATCHET AGAINST THE FRENCH

THE Indian village was wrapped in silence, when Du Lhut, The Great White Chief, quietly made his way into the forest and seated himself at the foot of a majestic tree. Soon the priest and a blanketed figure, which proved to be Chief Illiol, came forward and crouched beside him.

"The Black Robe," said Chief Illiol, as he nodded toward the priest, "brings bad news from our Iroquois brethren, the Mohawks."

"I was told by one of our Mohawk converts that they are laying plans to kill you and your followers when you pass through their country," the priest said gravely.

"But," protested Du Lhut, "two clans of the Mohawks—the Clan of the Tortoise and the Clan of the Wolf—want to be at peace with the French."

"That is true," replied the priest. "But the Clan of the Bear refuses to join in the treaty of peace, and its members will take up arms against you."

"Then we must leave at daybreak," Du Lhut said with decision. "Only by keeping in advance of the Mohawks can we escape their scalping knives."

Chief Illiol nodded his approval. "I will see that you have plenty of dried meat to take with you." Then, drawing himself up with dignity, he added: "It is an evil time to ask a favor of my French brother, but you know that at my death Scandawatti will be chief of the Onondagas. I want him to learn some of the ways of the white men. Will you take him with you? He will be a hostage in your hands, a proof of the good faith of the Onondagas."

"I shall be glad to take him," responded Du Lhut heartily. "He will be a good companion for my cousin Achille."

"Why was that child allowed to brave the dangers of the wilderness?" the priest asked sternly.

A grim smile lighted Du Lhut's face. "When we were many miles on our way, he came into camp. I couldn't send him back alone, and I had no men I could spare."

"What will Sieur de Casson do when he finds him gone?"

"Since his wife's death, De Casson has done nothing but mourn her loss. Unfortunately, he has neglected many of his obligations. When he has reason to think that he has lost his only child, he may be made to realize his duty to his son." Du Lhut rose to his

feet. "I must warn my men so that they may make their preparations for flight." He turned toward the priest: "Will you not return with us, father?"

The priest shook his head. "My duty is here," he said gravely.

The three men separated and entered the village by different paths. No sooner were they out of sight than a young Onondaga crawled from a near-by thicket. A smile of triumph lighted his face. He, too, would start on a journey tomorrow, but it would be to the land of the Mohawks. Because of a fancied wrong, he hated Chief Illiol and was eager to put the Mohawks on the trail of the French woodrangers.

Du Lhut and his *coureurs de bois* were ready at daybreak to leave the village, and as the Frenchmen had made many friends among the Onondagas, some of the young braves offered to guide them through the country so that they might more surely escape the Mohawks.

Already the news that Scandawatti was to return to Canada with the woodrangers had passed from one to another in the little Indian hunting village. And now that he was dressed for his long journey to the lodges of the white men, Little Red Savage was an object of envy to all the other children. He wore a beautiful suit of buckskin, embroidered and beaded, and at his side he carried his silver-mounted pistol and his hunting knife.

The two boys were dressed just alike, for Achille, too, had received from Chief Illiol a present of a suit exactly like Scandawatti's. They wore beautiful moc-casins of deerskin. Both were to take several pairs with them, for they would have to walk many weary miles if they kept up with the French woodrangers.

Red Deer was leaning against one of the bark houses, kicking at the dogs that yelped about him. When, through half-closed eyes, he saw the approach of Achille and Scandawatti, he picked up some stones to throw at the boys. Just as the first one left his hand he was seized by Agawayat, who shook him vigorously.

"Drop those stones!"

Thoroughly cowed, Red Deer let them fall.

"Now I know why the Oki of the False Faces chased you last night," Agawayat said sternly. "It is because of the evil thoughts that fill your bad heart."

Red Deer drew back abashed and slunk away without a word. He had not forgotten his fright of the night before. He feared that the Oki of the False Faces was in league with the demons of the woods, and that from now on the dark forest would hold unspeakable terrors for him.

A couple of hours before Du Lhut and his followers entered the forest, several squaws had taken the trail in advance of the Frenchmen. They drove before them some of the big husky dogs of the village, and those had packs securely fastened to their backs. The

dogs were to take the place of ponies in carrying the baggage of the French *coureurs de bois*.

Though moose and deer ranged the forest, the woodrangers had taken dried meat with them so that they might save their powder and lead. They had much to fear from the Mohawks, and the better to avoid discovery, Du Lhut had commanded his men not to fire a shot until they were out of the country of the Iroquois.

Chief Illiol approached Du Lhut, and placed his young nephew in the French captain's care. Warriors, squaws, and children surrounded the little company and followed them to the edge of the wood. Du Lhut drew the two boys in front of him and pointed the way into the forest. "Forward!" he cried, and one by one the *coureurs de bois* slipped into the shadows of the big trees. If they expected to escape the murderous Mohawks they would have to travel fast and hard.

The woodrangers were sunburnt to the color of Indians. They usually made more use of their tongues than did the silent red men, but now that danger threatened, the wearisome journey was brightened by neither words nor laughter.

By the time evening came the two boys were tired out with the day's travel. When they came to the camping place, they were glad to find that the squaws who had gone on ahead had already made the fire, and that a stew of buffalo meat was bubbling in the

kettle. After supper the Indians squatted on their heels around the fire; the Frenchmen wrapped themselves in their blankets and lay down to rest.

A storm threatened, so the two boys drew closer together as the lightning flashed and the thunder rolled. There was no rain, but the heavy wind increased in violence every minute. Lying there wrapped in their blankets, the boys could hear the boughs clashing above their heads as the wind shrieked on its way through the woods. While the voices of the storm whispered and moaned through the forest, the Indians and the woodrangers slept.

With the gray light of early morn, the squaws were up and at work. After a hasty breakfast, the little company again took to the trail. They were making for the St. Lawrence River, where they had left the canoes which they hoped to reach before the Mohawks could overtake them.

By the middle of the morning Scandawatti and Achille began to lag behind. So soon as Du Lhut observed this he ordered the boys into the hammocks which had been provided for just such an emergency. The rude hammocks, woven of tough twisted fibers, had been made by the Indians. Swinging in these, the two boys were carried through the forest pathways.

When the little company stopped that night, a space had to be cleared for the camp. While the woodrangers were constructing rude shelters, the squaws

hastily gathered wood to cook the flesh of the deer which had been brought in by the Onondaga guides, who, throughout the day, had scurried through the woods in search of game. Fortunately, they had killed some. The squaws started several small fires and quickly the flames crept over and among the twigs and branches.

Early the next morning, taking their squaws and the pack dogs, the Onondaga warriors started back along the trail to their own village. First, however, they searched the forest for hidden enemies. They circled back over the trail they had followed the night before, but they found no signs of the Mohawks. Then, having been rewarded with hatchets and knives, they began to retrace their steps. The Frenchmen took the well-beaten trail onward to the St. Lawrence River.

After several days' travel they reached the river, the highway of travel for the French of Canada. They found their boats where they had hidden them, and launching them, the muscular arms of the woodrangers sent them quickly forward.

They had traveled the river for several days when they discovered that their stock of dried meat and parched corn was beginning to be exhausted. "We must stop and hunt for a day," Du Lhut said to his men. "We must have food." Turning to the two boys, he said, "You little ones may play in the forest. But don't go far, though I doubt if either of you could

lose your way." And he laughed as he pulled them towards him.

All day long the two boys played in the woods. The coureurs de bois had brought along the hide of the big black bear, so by turns Achille and Scandawatti wrapped themselves in its folds and jumped at each other from behind great trees and from out dense thickets. After several hours of such play they at last grew tired and sleepy. Then they dragged the bear-skin into a thicket, lay down, and went sound asleep.

Late in the day the coureurs de bois returned to camp. Following Du Lhut's order they had not used their firearms, so they had by no means bagged so much game as they otherwise might have got. However, since all the woodrangers were skillful with bow and arrow, they had succeeded in killing a couple of deer, besides many quail and partridges. They laughed and joked as they ate their venison steaks and roasted the birds. They planned to take the latter with them on their journey. Before they lay down to sleep they carried the cooked birds and one of the deer to their boats, which they had safely hidden in the rushes earlier in the day.

The woodrangers thought they had escaped the Mohawks by this time. They did not expect to feel perfectly safe, however, until they were well out of that part of the country which the Iroquois claimed as their hunting grounds.

So soon as Achille and Scandawatti finished their suppers, they wrapped themselves in their blankets and lay close to the fire. Soothed by its warmth, they felt a drowsy comfort as they lay in the circle of light cast by the blazing wood. When the fire died down they became chilled; they shivered when the cold wind from the river swept over them.

"Scandawatti," whispered Achille. "I am cold."

"Yes, my brother, the wind blows cold. Let us crawl into the thicket and pull the hide of the bear over us."

Quietly the two boys stepped past the sleeping *coureurs de bois*, pushed aside a tangle of vines, and crept out of sight into the underbrush. They found the bearskin where they had left it. Wrapping themselves in its folds, they were soon fast asleep.

The wind swept through the forest and buffeted the leaves against the rugged trees. The swaying branches whipped back and forth. Cracking and breaking loose, they fell to the ground with a clattering noise that presently wakened the boys.

"Are the fairies dancing in the moonlight?" whispered Little White Savage sleepily, as the silver leaves of the poplar swirled and eddied in the wind. "No, the God of the Wind is racing through the wood," murmured Scandawatti drowsily. With this answer Little Red Savage again slumbered.

To Little White Savage, however, the voices of the

forest seemed to cry a warning—the weird calls of the night birds carried a note of fear. He peered through the thicket. The cold, white stars that shone in the sky cast their pale light on the sleeping woodrangers. Du Lhut lay so close to Achille that the boy could touch him.

“My cousin,” he whispered. Du Lhut’s eyes opened. “Something tells me there is danger.”

Du Lhut made no reply. Instead, he stretched out his arm and gripped the hand of his neighbor. Without a stir and without a word, each woodranger passed on the warning. They grasped their weapons, and noiselessly each man moved over till he lay in the shadows. Their keen eyes searched the woods on all sides, but they could see nothing. Nevertheless, the forest was filled with fierce Indian warriors, who slipped forward with furtive movements, then stood motionless, listening.

From their hiding places behind the big forest trees, Black Eagle and his band of Iroquois peered from out the shadows upon Du Lhut and his little company. Savage joy glittered in the eyes of Black Eagle. He believed that the woodrangers were sound asleep.

Each savage grasped his tomahawk, and with stealthy steps moved forward. Shadowy forms slipped from the shelter of a massive oak, others came from behind sheltering thickets. At a signal, they shouted their war cry and leaped out of the darkness.

At that instant the wiry woodrangers jumped to their feet. They needed no command to scatter when the terrible war whoops of the Iroquois rang out. Then redskins and Frenchmen came face to face. They sprang at each other like tigers. They fought with knife and tomahawk. They stabbed and cut.

Achille and Scandawatti crouched in the thicket and grasped each other's hands, as the woodrangers fought their way to the shelter of the big trees. To Little White Savage there seemed to be hundreds of the fierce Iroquois. The boy shivered with fear when he heard the long, quavering whoops that now came from every direction. He could hear the voice of Du Lhut encouraging his followers. "Antoine," he heard Du Lhut call. But Antoine was already in the grasp of a half dozen Iroquois who were determined to take him alive.

And the two little boys—where were their beautiful weapons? Before they lay down to sleep they had given their pistols to Du Lhut to put into his knapsack for the night so that they might not be hurt by the dew. Without their firearms they could now do nothing for their friends, who were so bravely fighting for the lives of the whole company as they retreated to the river where their boats were concealed.

"Shall we stay here or try to escape into the forest?" whispered Achille.

"We cannot escape now," said Scandawatti. "Too

many of Black Eagle's warriors are scattered through the woods."

"But you are of the Iroquois race. He will not dare to hurt you."

"Yes, I am of the Iroquois—the People of the Long House—but if Black Eagle captures me he will kill me, and then say that I was killed by the French."

Achille felt like crying when he saw Antoine—the big, good-natured woodranger—lying on the ground, securely bound. If he could only get near enough to slash at the thongs of deerskin that bound Antoine's hands and feet! He grasped his knife and reached out to draw aside the vines which formed his hiding place.

Little Red Savage quickly clutched his companion's arm. From every direction Iroquois warriors were stepping into the open. Achille counted them carefully. There were twenty of them, exactly twice as many as there were of the *coureurs de bois*.

"What are they going to do?" whispered Achille, as some of the redskins bound Antoine to a tree and others began piling wood about him.

"They are going to put him to death by fire. But they will torture him first."

Little White Savage shuddered. If he were only big and brave like his cousin Du Lhut. But where was Du Lhut? He wasn't captured, that was one comfort. But for a couple of hours he might not know

that Antoine was captured, and then, when he did find it out, it would be too late to help him. Little White Savage, his head sunk in his hands, was just now a very dejected looking little fellow.

But now Black Eagle and his band were going to celebrate their victory. Stripping a small tree of its branches, they began their war dance around it. They leaped and shrieked their war cry, they drove their hatchets deep into the tree, they boasted of their brave deeds and of the many scalps they had taken.

Achille peeped through the tangle of vines. The moon was shining brightly, and weird shadows, cast by the waving branches, flitted to and fro as though the elves of the woods were dancing. But when a blood-curdling war whoop roused Achille to action, he realized that it was not fairies who danced so blithely in the moonlight; rather, it was a score of naked and plumed redskin warriors.

And good, great-hearted Antoine, what was to become of him?

"Scandawatti!"—a look of decision came into Achille's eyes—"I am going to frighten Black Eagle and his band with the false face." And he drew from his bosom the hideous false face that had frightened Red Deer and Great Bear.

"But, you will be seen," protested Scandawatti.

"No, my brother, I shall not be seen," whispered Achille. "Do you see that group of saplings over

there in the shadow?" Little Red Savage nodded. "You will notice that the shadowy space grows smaller every minute. Very soon the moon will shine directly upon the spot. I shall place myself there while the ground is still hidden in the black shadows. Then, when it lies in full moonlight, I shall moan and cry to attract the attention of the Iroquois."

"It is well," said Little Red Savage, "but it will frighten them more if you will wear the hide of the black bear, too, so they cannot see your body."

Silently and carefully the boys crept through the underbrush. The bearskin was a heavy load to carry, but even so they at length found themselves clear of the thickets. They stole along rapidly and as silently as shadows. When they came close to the clump of saplings they found that the young trees grew out of the stump of the parent tree. The great tree had been cut off about three feet above the ground, so that its stump now made a good resting place for the feet of Little White Savage.

Carefully, Achille wrapped himself in the hide of the big black bear. He placed the large head with its wide open mouth on top of his own head, and then over that he placed the hideous false face. For fear he might be discovered too soon, he drew a fold of the bear's hide in front of the false face. Then, with increasing excitement, he waited until the moonlight should reveal him to the bloodthirsty Iroquois.

"My brother," whispered Scandawatti, "I am going to the brink of the river to get my bow and arrows. I left them in one of the boats."

Little White Savage nodded his head. His thoughts were intent upon the leaping redskins, who were making the night hideous with their shrieks, and upon his good friend Antoine, who so many times had carried him through the forest when the way was long and the trail was rough.





CHAPTER V

BLACK EAGLE CAPTURES LITTLE WHITE SAVAGE

LITTLE RED SAVAGE reached the river bank in safety, and made his way to the inlet, overhung with trees, where the woodrangers had concealed their boats. As he neared the spot he heard the swish of a heavy body in the underbrush, but, since he could see nothing, he thought it was a deer that had come down to the river to drink. He crouched and waited for the animal to come out of the shadows. Suddenly he was startled by a loon, which rose with a squawk from the rushes. It was so close that Scandawatti could feel the breeze from its flapping wings.

Just then an Iroquois stepped out into the moonlight. He stood for a moment, looked up the river and then down, then turned and disappeared into the forest. Little Red Savage muttered to himself, "I should have thought of that. Of course they will have scouts out."

Presently he found the spot where the boats had been hidden—but there were no boats. The boy thought the woodrangers must have taken them away. But where were Du Lhut and his followers? None of

the coureurs de bois had been killed, although all had received either stabs or cuts. Fortunately, there were but two whose wounds were serious.

Having escaped from the Iroquois, the woodrangers had fled to their boats, and had rowed up the river to a wooded island where they made a temporary camp. Just now they were dressing their wounds and planning the rescue of Antoine, Achille, and Scandawatti.

Meanwhile, having searched carefully up and down the bank, Little Red Savage had at last found a birch-bark canoe. The light boat danced on the ripples as he pushed it out from the shore, and his paddle flashed in and out of the water so swiftly that his canoe seemed scarcely to touch the water as it shot across the current. As he glanced back at the forest, he saw a deer steal down to the river to drink. It waded timidly into the shallows. Suddenly there was a splash, a snort of fear, and the deer leaped to one side. With a bound it cleared the low bushes that edged the shore, and in an instant it had disappeared into the gloom. At the same moment Little Red Savage caught a glimpse of the plumed head of an Iroquois. The boy urged his boat forward with all possible speed.

When Scandawatti approached the island he was greeted by Du Lhut. "An Iroquois is watching the river," he whispered to Du Lhut, as the prow of his canoe was caught by the woodrangers and pulled to the bank. Then they talked in whispers.

"If the Iroquois are watching the river, they must fear we shall try to rescue Antoine. But where is Achille?"

"He is hidden in a clump of saplings. He wrapped himself in the bearskin and put on the false face. He is waiting until the moon throws its white light on his hiding place. Then he will show himself to Black Eagle and his warriors."

"Mon Dieu!" cried Du Lhut. "That little one is daring. Even now he may be roasting in the fires of the Iroquois."

"The Iroquois are a brave race, but they fear the okies that wear false faces," Little Red Savage said gravely.

"That is true," said Du Lhut. "And that is the only thing that will save him from capture. But we must not waste time, for every minute is precious."

Soon they had arranged a comfortable shelter for the two wounded *coureurs de bois*. Then they carried their boats down to the water's edge, to a place where the big trees cast their black shadows upon the river. Concealed by the darkness, they launched the canoes and let them drift quietly down stream until they could see the gleam of the Iroquois camp fires. Then they landed.

Although greatly outnumbered, Du Lhut and his brave *coureurs de bois* were determined to rescue their comrade Antoine from the ferocious Iroquois, who

were just now getting ready to torture him. Noiselessly the woodrangers slipped through the forest. Flitting from the shadow of one tree into that of another, they approached close enough to Black Eagle and his band to be able to use their guns with good effect, whenever the time to attack the redskins should come.

Little Red Savage had found his bow and arrows. Now, while the *coureurs de bois* were stealing through the woods to get within striking distance of the Iroquois, Scandawatti slipped from tree to tree and from thicket to thicket until he came to a jungle of underbrush through which he squeezed his slender body. At some distance he could see the clump of saplings, the hiding place of Little White Savage, and close at hand was Black Eagle, the outcast Onondaga.

Little White Savage had no idea that his friends were so near. He felt that every shadow must conceal a redskin, and that they were spying on him from every thicket. He listened intently, but the light breeze brought to his ears only the cry of a noisy night hawk, which called long and loudly, finally to be hushed into frightened silence by the derisive hoot of an owl.

Achille's nerves were beginning to quiver with excitement. In a very short time the light of the full moon would betray him to the eyes of the Iroquois. Wrapped in the skin of the big black bear, and wearing the hideous false face, he would appear to them as

an oki. Fascinated with his plan, he fixed his eyes on the ground, and watched the shadows give way before the clear white rays of the moon. Nearer and nearer crept the line of light. The stump on which Achille was standing elevated him several feet above the ground, so that the savages couldn't help seeing him so soon as the shadows lifted.

Suddenly there was a rustling in the jungle of underbrush that bordered the opposite side of the clearing. The redskins jumped to their feet and grasped their weapons. Their fear changed to grunts of satisfaction, however, as a party of Mohawk braves, with plumed heads and bodies streaked with paint, slipped from behind trees and thickets. One after another they stepped into the open and mingled with Black Eagle and his outcast Indians.

Poor Antoine. Du Lhut and his brave little band would be nothing against so many of these tigerish Mohawks.

The moon was flooding the open space with light, and now shone directly upon the clump of saplings in which Achille was concealed. In his excitement at the unexpected appearance of the Mohawks, the boy had dropped the fold of bearskin which covered the false face, and had leaned far out. He thus attracted the attention of a young Mohawk warrior, whose cry of fear, as he darted among his companions, awakened Achille to the danger of his position.

As the eyes of the Iroquois warriors followed the direction indicated by the young Mohawk, Achille spread out his arms, and throwing each around the top of a tough young sapling, flung himself out into the air with a shriek. To the eyes of the frightened Iroquois he was a monster, a black bear with a false face. He was flying through the air—he must be an oki.

Achille, swaying to and fro, clung to the saplings. The black claws of the bear, which hung over his hands, flapped back and forth as he swung like a pendulum between the tough young trees.

Antoine stared with mouth wide open. He, too, would have fled, but he was too securely bound to escape. Although he had been told that there were demons in the woods, he had never before seen one; now he could hardly believe his eyes. The false face covered the huge head of the black bear—the mouth of it was twisted into a horrible grin. Shrieks and other blood-curdling noises came from the monster's lips, which showed red as with blood. Even Antoine was sure that sparks of fire flashed from the eyes.

There was a rush of howling redskins. In their haste to get away from that frightful manitou, they stumbled over one another. As the Indians crowded together in their efforts to escape, there came a flash from the guns of Du Lhut and his woodrangers. With the report, a number of Iroquois lay stretched upon the ground—dead.

Little Red Savage, who had been hidden in the thicket all the while, had kept his eye on Black Eagle. Now, an arrow from the boy's bow struck the renegade Onondaga in the knee, just as he fled past his hiding place.

Black Eagle had been carried along with such swiftness in the rush of panic-stricken redskins, that the immediate effects of his wound were seemingly not serious. Within a short time, however, he knew that he would have to be carried if he were to escape from this devil-haunted wood. Now, as he crouched against a tree, one of his followers hastened by. Black Eagle called to him. They talked in whispers, then the young warrior hurried away, while Black Eagle crawled to a thicket and concealed himself under its low-hanging branches.

While Little White Savage was jumping into the air and sending piercing shrieks after the redskins, the woodrangers who were hidden in the forest shook with silent laughter. Poor Antoine, however, was as terror-stricken as the Iroquois themselves; great beads of moisture stood on his forehead, as the bear with the false face leaped into the air and uttered wild cries.

As Achille's eyes followed the redskins in their flight, he saw the bound figure of Antoine. He caught the look of fear in the eyes of the trapper, and his heartrending shrieks turned to shouts of laughter. The boy was amused that Antoine didn't recognize the

bearskin which he himself had stripped from the black bear, and that he did not know it was little Achille de Casson who was kicking about in the air above his head.

A spirit of mischief prompted Achille to mystify his old friend even further. Slipping from his perch among the saplings, he dropped the hide of the bear from his shoulders. Then he threw it and the false face under a bush and started to encircle the thickets, so as to approach Antoine from the opposite side of the clearing. But when he tried to penetrate the thickets that blocked his way, he found the thorns which grew on every branch were dagger-like in sharpness. He had to go some distance into the forest to avoid the thorny jungle.

Believing that all the savages were gone, he hurried along, unmindful of the noise his footsteps made in the silent wood. When he came opposite the thicket where Black Eagle lay concealed, he stumbled over a tough creeper and fell, face forward, within reach of the vengeful Onondaga's hand. When the boy raised his head, Black Eagle clutched his throat, stifled his cries, and dragged him under the bushes. Achille struggled as best he could against the powerful red-skin. Gradually he grew weaker, finally he gave up in exhaustion, then all grew dark.

Black Eagle reached for his knife, but when he saw the boy was a former captive, an evil look blazed in his

eyes. He would kill him, but he would torture him first. Hoping for a glimpse of his friends, his keen eyes searched the forest. His wound put him in a furious temper; he fretted as time passed and no one came.

Suddenly, three warriors stepped from behind a thicket and approached silently. As they bent over the limp form of Little White Savage they talked in low tones. Then one of the redskins raised Achille in his arms, threw him over his shoulder and started off at a rapid walk. The other two laid a hammock of tough creepers on the ground, placed Black Eagle upon it, shouldered their burden, and took to the trail.

They hurried through the wood, crossed a swamp, and before long came to a little stream. The brook was shallow, so they waded through it until they came to a place where it flowed between walls of rock. Here the fissures provided good footholds for their moccasined feet. As the rocky walls were of no great height, a few steps brought them to the top. For some distance there was a level stretch, then came a gradually sloping hill. When they had climbed to the top of it they stopped for a moment to rest.

Below them, on the opposite side, lay the Indian encampment. It was an old camping ground where bark tepees and lodges had been left standing. Brush fires had already been started, and the warriors were now broiling steaks, cut from a bear they had killed.

They talked but little, for they felt that they had been cheated of their prey by a demon of the woods. They were in an angry mood.

When the warriors carrying Achille and Black Eagle hurried down the hill and approached the nearest camp fire, the redskins assembled there quickly gathered about them. The young brave who was carrying Achille laid his burden at the feet of the scowling savages.

A warrior of stately bearing scornfully touched the limp form of Little White Savage with his foot.

"And this is our only prisoner! All that we have to show for our long journey and the death of our brave warriors."

"The Oki of the False Faces turned our blood to water," said a young chief gloomily.

Black Eagle nodded his head. "The devils of the wood are in league with the palefaces." The red man's hate for the man of the white race was in Black Eagle's eyes as he looked down at his prisoner.

The cool breeze from the river fanned the face of Little White Savage and he opened his eyes. Just as he realized that he was a captive among the Iroquois, Black Eagle raised his tomahawk to strike. The fire-light gleamed on the shining steel. Achille was powerless to ward off the terrible blow, and his eyes widened with terror as the tomahawk descended. He saw it coming nearer and nearer, but he made no sound until

the crushing blow brought from him a low shivering cry.

Black Eagle glared at his victim, then he grasped his scalping knife.

As he bent over Little White Savage, a shrill war whoop rang out. In startled silence Black Eagle drew back and pointed to the hill overlooking the encampment. Each warrior grasped his weapon, and prepared for flight. Again Black Eagle was taken in charge by his friends. They hurried off in a direction different from that taken by the Mohawks. The latter sought the shelter of the big trees at the lower end of the encampment.

In the confusion, Little White Savage was forgotten. The scout who had given the war cry hurried down the hill, and in his haste he almost stumbled over Little White Savage. A cunning look came into his eyes as he picked up the child. He would hide him, and later come back and strip him of his finery. But where should he hide the little paleface? He gave a searching look around at the tepees and bark houses, then started off on a run.





CHAPTER VI

THE MOHAWKS HEED THE WARNING CRY: "THE OKI
OF THE FALSE FACES!"

AS Little White Savage jumped from his perch among the saplings, Du Lhut and his coureurs de bois came from behind thickets and trees and surrounded Antoine. When they had cut his bonds, he turned to one of his friends and whispered: "Did you see the demon that is part man and part bear?" The woodranger roared with delight and repeated the question to the others.

"Antoine," said Du Lhut, shaking with laughter, "where were your eyes and ears? Didn't you recognize my little cousin, wrapped in the skin you stripped from the black bear?"

"You do not mean to say it was little Achille de Casson?"

"The very one!"

Antoine looked dumfounded.

"I was sure it was a wood devil. But where is Achille now?" he cried.

Before an answer could be given, there were shouts

of greeting from all sides, and a party of twenty or more French hunters and trappers came from the shelter of trees and thickets. They were joyfully received by Du Lhut and his followers.

"François de Montigny!" exclaimed Du Lhut as he warmly clasped the hand of the leader, a young Frenchman of medium height, who, although dressed in buckskin, as were the other woodrangers, carried himself with the air of a courtier.

"How fares it with our little cousin, Achille de Casson?"

"I never pretend to keep track of him very long at a time, but I can tell you where I saw him last." And Du Lhut pointed to the group of saplings that had sheltered Little White Savage, and told François how Achille had played the part of the Oki of the False Faces. Then he continued: "Achille and the little Onondaga, whom we are taking as a hostage to Quebec, are inseparable. I have no doubt they will soon make their appearance."

"Sieur de Casson was in a terrible way when he found Achille gone," said François. "He would have come himself, but he was too ill to attempt so long a journey. When I got on your trail and found that Achille had been taken along with your party, I sent one of my men back to tell De Casson. For the first time, he seems to realize his neglect of his child. Poor fellow, the loss of his wife was a terrible blow;

but anyway, the children of the noblesse of Canada are allowed to run wild in the forest."

"That is true," said Du Lhut, "but De Casson hasn't the excuse of poverty that many of the others have. Come, now! Tell us the news from Paris." Then, seated about the camp fires which Black Eagle and his band had made for their own comfort, the woodrangers listened to news from France, until Du Lhut and François withdrew to talk privately.

Soon the woodrangers began to prepare for the night. They removed the bodies of the dead Iroquois, and tended the fires. Then, wrapping themselves in their blankets, they lay down to sleep. All but Antoine. Antoine felt worried.

"And your little cousin?" he said, approaching Du Lhut and De Montigny.

"Never mind about him," said Du Lhut impatiently. "We shall keep watch tonight, and no doubt Achille and Scandawatti will come in soon." And until long after the coureurs de bois were fast asleep, the two Frenchmen talked of gay Paris.

Presently, Antoine stirred in his sleep, then raised on his elbow and looked searchingly around the circle of sleeping woodrangers. Satisfied that those he sought were not there, he arose and quietly approached the two leaders.

"I see neither your cousin nor the little Onondaga," he began.

"Is it possible they are not yet here?" exclaimed Du Lhut. "I took it for granted that they had come in long ago."

"The last time I saw your cousin was when he was kicking and screeching among the saplings," Antoine replied.

"I forgot that the little ones were absent. You had better rouse some of the best trackers. It will soon be daylight, so it will not be hard to trail them."

Taking flaming brands from the fire, the woodrangers began searching the forest for traces of the two boys.

"They are probably asleep in some thicket," said Du Lhut, as he and De Montigny joined the searching party.

"I saw the little Onondaga follow the Mohawks into the forest," said one of the woodrangers.

"He may have gone to join them," said another.

"Never!" said Du Lhut. "I have watched him closely. Even though he is a little red savage, he is the soul of honor. He is a hostage in our hands and he will not run away."

"I would not be too sure," muttered another. "They are all alike."

"No, they are not," his companion answered. "I have lived amongst them for months at a time, and I know there are many redskins with ideas of honor as high as those of any noble at the court of King Louis."

A shrug of the shoulders was the only response to this.

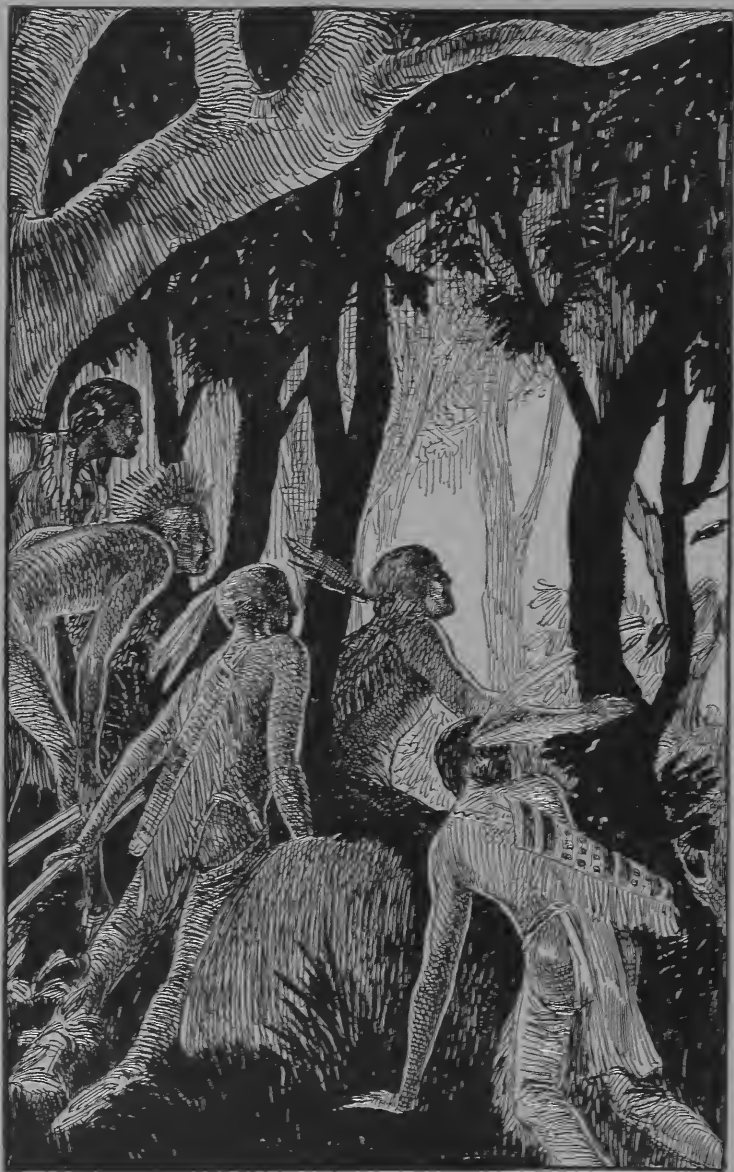
All that had been suggested as to the whereabouts of Scandawatti was, however, quite true. He had followed the terrified Iroquois when they disappeared into the forest, and, safely hidden, he had seen Black Eagle creep under the sheltering thicket. Little Red Savage knew that it was only because Black Eagle and his band were fighting against the French that the Mohawks joined forces with them. The Iroquois hated traitors and despised a warrior who for his own safety would betray his tribesmen. But whatever their quarrels among themselves, they always banded together to fight the enemies of their race.

Scandawatti crept cautiously forward when he saw the young warrior turn back to talk to Black Eagle.

"Red Fox," he heard Black Eagle say, "you must bring help that I may be carried to safety. An arrow from an enemy's bow has wounded me."

Little Red Savage rocked back and forth chuckling to himself.

When Red Fox hastened to pick up the trail of the fleeing Indians, Scandawatti followed at a safe distance. As the boy crept forward or crouched in the shadows, he looked like a panther on the trail of the redskin. When Red Fox looked back to see if he was being followed, Scandawatti pressed his slight body against the trunk of a tree. He heard scratching



"The forest was filled with fierce Indian warriors."

among the branches, and before he could move, a wild cat pounced down on his back. As the great cat leaped on him from out the darkness, the boy's cry of terror was drowned in the clamor of its terrific yowl. Instantly it left him and took a flying leap in the direction of Red Fox.

The young brave turned and faced the screeching animal, his hatchet raised threateningly. The cat crouched as though about to spring, then turned and disappeared in the dense undergrowth that choked the wood.

Red Fox once more took to the trail. When this led into a swamp, the path the young warrior was taking was made plain to Scandawatti by the sinuous waving of the high grass. The boy could no longer hear the voices of the woodrangers. He heard only the "Cheep! Cheep!" of sleepy birds, and the cry of a screech owl that broke the lonely silence.

The moonlight cast a silvery sheen on plant and blossom, and on the wild rice that filled the swamp, as Red Fox raced along the well-marked trail. He knew that he must take advantage of the waning night, if he would bring help to Black Eagle.

When Red Fox came to the brook, Little Red Savage had to skulk in the shadows of the willows that bordered it. He took advantage of every shadow and of every cover.

Scandawatti would kill, or be killed, if the redskin

he was following were a Huron. He was not following a Huron, however, but an Iroquois, not because of hate, but because of loyalty to his new friends. He wanted to warn them if the Mohawks were planning to entrap them. Chief Illiol had told him that the French were not at war with the Iroquois, and that they only wanted to avoid a conflict with the Mohawks.

At last the feet of Little Red Savage began to lag from weariness. Satisfied that the Mohawks, instead of planning an attack, were only too anxious to avoid another sight of the Oki of the False Faces, he turned back, crept to shelter, and was soon fast asleep.

Day was beginning to break when the twittering of birds aroused Scandawatti. He hastened through the wood, and with leaps and bounds crossed the open spaces. He was afraid he would delay his friends if they wanted to get an early start.

When Little Red Savage neared the encampment of the French, he heard the flapping of huge wings and saw the vultures gathering to a feast. They had come to gorge themselves on the bodies of the Iroquois, which the woodrangers had thrown into the thickets after taking the scalps. He stepped noiselessly forward, and came face to face with Antoine, who was carefully searching the rough trail. A shout from Antoine brought Du Lhut and De Montigny.

"And my cousin, where is he?" asked Du Lhut, as Scandawatti gravely looked from one to the other.

"When I last saw my brother he was wearing the hide of the black bear and was swinging among the saplings," answered Scandawatti.

"Since that time no one has seen him," said Du Lhut.

Little Red Savage darted forward and began searching the edge of the encampment. In the dim light of early morning it would take keen eyes to find the trail, but the signs were easily read by this child of the forest. Scandawatti searched the thickets and peered beneath the bushes. The *coureurs de bois* gathered about him, when finally he drew the bearskin from its hiding place, unrolled it, and showed the false face hidden in its folds.

Without a word Scandawatti turned and, skirting the jungle of wild brier, hastened through the wood. The trail led him to the thicket which had been the hiding place of Black Eagle. To Little Red Savage the story of Achilles's capture by Black Eagle was plainly written in the crushed grasses, broken twigs, and scattered leaves.

"My brother has been captured by Black Eagle, and carried away," he said.

The faces of Du Lhut and De Montigny looked pale and drawn. Du Lhut spoke hurriedly.

"We must hurry back to camp. We may be able to overtake them. It will be best to divide our forces. I shall take fifteen men and follow the trail of Black

Eagle. François, you take the other half of our force to a heavily wooded point of land some distance up the river. Antoine will show you a good hiding place."

He turned to Scandawatti. "We shall not fight the Mohawks if we can help it. We are not after scalps. All we want is to rescue my cousin. If we are to snatch him from the hands of the Mohawks, we must follow close on their trail."

"My brother saved my life, and I will help you find him," answered Little Red Savage.

Before long, François de Montigny and his company of woodrangers were making their way up the river. The fog that hung over the stream concealed them from view, and under the guidance of Antoine, they hid themselves in the dense underbrush along the bank.

Du Lhut and his woodrangers, with Scandawatti in the lead, took up the trail of Black Eagle. They hurried through the forest and waded into the swamp. The black mud clung to their feet and crept up to their knees. They tried to hurry, but their limbs seemed weighted with lead. When they reached the brook, they dashed in and washed off the black swamp muck. Then they left the brook and strode swiftly along the well-marked trail.

Little Red Savage pointed to a fresh trail on the left, and the coureurs de bois hastened forward. As the trail became fresher, each step was taken cautiously. They traveled swiftly but quietly. Their dark eyes

snapped with keen satisfaction. Sniffing the breeze, they detected the odor of smoke when they reached the foot of the hill overlooking the Indian encampment. Now they advanced cautiously. Sheltered behind bushes and trees they trod lightly in each other's footsteps.

They had almost reached the top of the hill when Du Lhut saw the lithe body of an Iroquois rise from the ground and reach the summit with a single bound. As Du Lhut's revolver cracked, the redskin threw himself headlong, shrieking his war cry.

"He escaped me," muttered Du Lhut. "Come, men!" he shouted. "We must race for it."

The woodrangers needed no second bidding, and in a surprisingly short time they were nearing the top of the hill. Cautiously they lifted their heads above the brow. No one was in sight. There were no signs of life in tepee or lodge, though the camp fires were still blazing. The Frenchmen fired into the tepees and bark houses. The shots crackled loudly, but they brought no answering volley.

François de Montigny heard the shots. As this was the signal agreed upon, he prepared to cut off the retreat of the Mohawks.

The guns of the woodrangers were loaded, and everything was in readiness when the red-skinned, ferocious Iroquois glided stealthily from out the woods. Instantly they threw themselves forward, shrieking

their war cry. There was a fusillade of crackling shots. Then the Indians grasped their knives and tomahawks and sprang forward. They were intent upon a hand-to-hand battle with their enemies, the woodrangers.

Just at that instant Du Lhut and his followers dashed through the deserted camp to take part in the fight. Dodging behind trees, jumping out to stab or cut, springing to attack a redskin or to help a friend, the French *coureurs de bois* were kept busy. If the Indians sought the shelter of the big trees, after them plunged the woodrangers. The war whoops of the Iroquois were answered by the wild cries of the Frenchmen.

Little Red Savage felt a strange throbbing in his heart as the shots whistled through the forest, and the fierce yells of the Mohawks and the woodrangers broke the silence. He was an Iroquois, and the blood of his people was being spilled by its enemies; but loyalty to his friends, and his desire to keep the peace pact between the Onondagas and the French prevented him from fighting on either side.

Discordant cries echoed and re-echoed through the wood, and slugs of lead found a lodging-place in the bodies of Frenchmen and Indians. The battle was going against the Mohawks. Little Red Savage couldn't see the Iroquois shot and cut to pieces without going to their aid. He hastened to where the battle was hottest between the Mohawks and the Frenchmen.

Above the sounds of the struggle was heard a shout of terror, and then, in the Iroquois tongue, the cry, "The Oki of the False Faces! The Oki of the False Faces!" At first only one voice cried out; then there was a chorus of yells, all giving the same warning, "The Oki of the False Faces!"

Suddenly the fighting stopped. Du Lhut and his woodrangers thought Achille had escaped from the Iroquois, and was again frightening the Mohawks with the hideous false face. The Mohawks were sure that the Oki of the False Faces had again appeared to some of their number.

Who could fight against so powerful a manitou? Not the Iroquois, who knew its power. With cries of warning to each other, they fled into the depths of the forest.





CHAPTER VII

LITTLE RED SAVAGE FINDS HIS BROTHER

DU LHUT had told the truth when he declared that all he wanted was to rescue his cousin. Now, when he found that the Mohawks were taking to flight, he commanded his men to cease firing.

Giving orders to the woodrangers to bring their wounded comrades to the deserted Indian camp, Du Lhut and De Montigny set out for that part of the wood where the Oki of the False Faces had caused so much terror. They looked carefully around, and there they saw Little Red Savage hiding among the branches of a big tree. When he saw them he jumped to the ground. Du Lhut strode forward.

"Where is my cousin?" he demanded.

Little Red Savage shook his head. "I have not seen him."

"He must have again appeared to the Mohawks," said De Montigny.

"My brother did not appear to the Mohawks. I shouted the warning, 'The Oki of the False Faces,' to save my people. But I have not seen my brother."

"Come then," said Du Lhut, "let us hasten back to the camp. We may find some trace of him there."

When they arrived at the camp they found that many of the woodrangers had been wounded. Those were being cared for by their companions, who, from much experience, had learned to dress wounds with the skill of surgeons.

The tepees and the lodges were now carefully searched. All were empty. Every foot of ground was gone over for the footprints of Little White Savage. When, at length, the imprint of his body was seen on the ground, with blood near it, Du Lhut and De Montigny looked gloomily at each other.

Scandawatti seemed to read their thoughts. "The Iroquois never carry away the dead bodies of their enemies. My brother is still alive," he declared.

Du Lhut and De Montigny wandered to the lower end of the encampment.

Little Red Savage searched the bark houses, but there was no trace of Achille there. He climbed to the top of the hill that overlooked the camp, and saw where the Iroquois scout had thrown himself down. He followed the trail of the scout, curious to learn if he had fled with Black Eagle or if he were a Mohawk. When Scandawatti came to the spot where Achille's body had lain, he at once knew that the Iroquois scout had carried Little White Savage away. The Indian boy followed the trail to the center of the

camp. There, the footprints of the woodrangers crossed and re-crossed the trail so often that those of the Mohawk were completely wiped out.

Scandawatti's heart was heavy with disappointment. Where had they hidden his brother? He stood motionless, every sense keyed to the highest pitch. A faint moan came to his ears. He looked around; his eyes lighted on an oven made of stones and plastered over with mud. He pulled away the flat stone that served as a door, and peering through the opening he saw a little form lying huddled on the floor. Then he shrilled his war cry with such strange quaverings that it brought the coureurs de bois running.

"My brother," he murmured, as he dragged the limp form out of the oven into the light, and laid it at the feet of François de Montigny, who had been the first to arrive.

François fell on his knees beside Little White Savage. He placed his hand over Achilles's heart. It throbbed faintly under his touch.

An earthen jar containing a small quantity of water stood at one side of the oven. De Montigny picked it up and dashed its contents into Achilles's face. Slowly the big brown eyes opened; soon a faint glow came into the pale cheeks.

De Montigny clasped the little form close. "My cousin," he whispered, and his face quivered with emotion as he pressed the limp body closely to his bosom.

"François." The murmur came faintly from the lips of Little White Savage. The excited Frenchman clasped the child more closely, and kissed him again and again.

"The palefaces are queer people," muttered Little Red Savage. "Their warriors are as brave and daring as the warriors of the Iroquois. But to see them act like squaws!"

François de Montigny was not the only one who was excited. The woodrangers formed a circle about the group; they whooped and yelled like Indians on the war path. But Little White Savage was not afraid of a band of howling savages—if they were white savages, and friendly.

All the woodrangers showed themselves to be his friends. Their sharp knives cut boughs for his bed, and since all worked together they soon constructed a soft resting place where he could lie in comfort.

Black Eagle had intended to kill Achille when he brought his tomahawk down with such force. Fortunately, the weapon glanced, making only a shallow wound.

Du Lhut knew that they would have to expect fever with such a wound as that of Achille's, and that they would have to remain where they were for a couple of weeks at least. For that reason he sent a boat to the island for the two wounded woodrangers. Then the company settled down for a period of rest.

During the stay the woodrangers put in much of their time in hunting and fishing. They roamed the woods in parties of four and five; they supplied the camp with food; they cared for the injured. Pure air and plain food helped to heal the wounded, so that all soon recovered.

For a few days, however, Achille's condition caused Du Lhut and De Montigny great anxiety. Just as they were beginning to despair, there was a marked change for the better, and from that time on the little fellow's improvement was rapid.

Soon the two boys were again roaming the woods. They were here, there, and everywhere. To Little Red Savage, the wood was the home of okies, good and bad. Witches, too, haunted its deep recesses and there practiced their wicked magic. To Little White Savage, the wood was the home of tricky sprites, fairies, and wee people of every sort. Demons, too, had their habitation there. To both the boys the forest was a place of never-ending delight. When night came every muscle was tired, but with sound sleep in the open, and the plain, wholesome food of the hunters, they were ready for another day's tramp through the forest so soon as each new morning came.

After two weeks Du Lhut and his hardy coureurs de bois broke camp and again took the trail. They had been traveling the river for several days, when they stopped to rest and hunt. They followed a well-beaten

trail to a former camping place, and from a hollow tree they took a kettle they had hidden there several months before. Putting in water and dried meat, they hung it over the fire.

Little White Savage was trying to capture a red-poll, when a flock of quail scurried from beneath the bushes. Crackling shots broke the silence; the woodrangers had procured enough quail for their dinner.

While the men roasted their birds, the two boys romped through the forest with as much freedom as the squirrels that peeped at them from the branches of the big trees. They clambered over stumps and danced on the fallen trunks. They chased each other up and down the river bank, and frightened a crane so that it dropped the fish it had snapped from the water with its long bill. They startled a big blue heron, which rose into the air with a rasping cry, its flapping wings carrying it up the river and out of reach of the active little woodmen. Soon hunger drove them back to camp, and there they joined the circle of coureurs de bois who had filled their bowls from the bubbling kettle and were now squatting on their heels around the fire.

When the woodrangers finished their dinner, and as they lay smoking their pipes beneath the trees, two Huron braves made their appearance and signalled to the Frenchmen to follow them. Without a word Du Lhut and his men grasped their weapons and fol-

lowed the Indians to a seeming jungle of underbrush. Pushing their way through this, they discovered a rough bark shelter. In it lay the bodies of an Algonquin warrior, a squaw, and a papoose. They had been killed as they slept.

"Poor things!" muttered François. "Their troubles are over."

Du Lhut turned to the Hurons. "A party of Mohawks are ahead of us. These poor creatures have been dead a week."

The Hurons nodded. "We crossed the trail of the Mohawks several days ago," they explained.

"Then we shall spend a few days hunting," said Du Lhut, "so that we may have a supply of dried meat which will last us until we reach Quebec." And Du Lhut and his coureurs de bois made their way back to camp.

In the days that followed Achille and Scandawatti roamed the woods at will. Sometimes they joined a party of woodrangers; at other times they wandered off by themselves. There was always food for them in the woods; if they did not find game when they were hungry, they at least found berries and roots. Even when they found game they were not cruel in their killing, for they loved the little animals of the forest. They killed only when they needed food. Their oven for cooking was a hole in the ground. Into this they put red-hot stones. Then they covered their birds

with a thick coating of clay, put over them a covering of hot embers, and soon a delicious banquet was ready for them.

When the shadows lengthened they hurried back to camp, to the evening blaze with its warmth and light. After a hearty meal they sat around the camp fire and, with sparkling eyes, listened to the stories of hair-breadth escapes, told by the daring woodrangers. Always, these tales were of the bravery and cunning of some tribe of the Iroquois. And always, as he listened, the eyes of Little Red Savage gleamed with the pride of race.





CHAPTER VIII

THE BOYS GO HUNTING AND ARE CHASED BY WOLVES

WHEN night came, the howling of wolves and the wailing cry of panthers echoed through the wood and caused the boys to huddle close to the fire. The night birds, timid in the bright light of day, came out of their hiding places and filled the wood with their tremulous cries. High in the sky, flocks of chattering birds could be seen migrating to the south, trailing between the sky and the earth like a dark cloud.

One such night, after a long day's tramp through the woods, the two boys rolled themselves in their blankets and were almost asleep when a harsh "Hoo, hoo!" startled them. The rays of the moon shone brightly against a hollow tree, and from a hole in the trunk the boys saw a great owl peering out at them. They couldn't sleep with those unwinking, yellow-rimmed eyes staring into theirs.

Scandawatti reached for his bow, but before he could shoot there was a rush of wild fowl through the air. They heard the "Honk, honk" of wild geese, and in the sky they saw a flying wedge of gray.

In an instant the woodrangers were on their feet and running towards the river. With gun in hand they raced through the wood, Achille and Scandawatti close on their heels. Creeping to the river bank, they found the water almost covered with wild geese. The boys waded into the shallows and caught the birds with their hands.

"Don't waste powder and lead," cried Du Lhut, who was laying about him with a good oak stick.

The next morning there was feasting and merry-making among the coureurs de bois.

"This will be a day of rest," said Du Lhut, "for tomorrow we must take the trail toward Quebec."

"Let us go hunting this afternoon," whispered Achille to Scandawatti. Little Red Savage nodded his assent.

While Du Lhut and Antoine were overseeing the preparations for their journey, the boys slipped off through the woods in search of game. They cared more for being in the open than they did for the hunting. When they became tired, they lay on their backs, and through the interlacing branches of the trees looked straight up into the blue. Then they talked of the okies that have their home in the fleecy clouds which float across the sky. At the end of the day, all that Achille had to show to the credit of his gun was a rabbit. Little Scandawatti had a string of birds.

Their wandering carried them a greater distance

from the camp than they had ever gone before, and the chill of night was in the air when they started back. Daylight was fading, as they hurried on. The moon came up as they reached the edge of the wood, and since there was no wind, the shadows under the great trees slumbered.

The two little boys had come to a clearing, about half a mile in extent—a clearing which they would have to cross in order to reach the strip of forest which bordered the river and sheltered the camp of the French coureurs de bois. The boys were glad to leave the gloomy wood, where the wide-spreading branches of the trees shut out the faint gray twilight. With the coming of the night came the big, gray timber wolves, which from time to time appeared and disappeared in the depths of the wood.

Achille and Scandawatti were halfway across the clearing when the prolonged howl of a wolf came faintly to their ears. The boys knew that meant the calling together of the fierce wolves which hunt in packs. Though widely separated, wolf answered wolf. The mournful howl was raised again and again, now coming from one side of the wood, now from the other side.

The boys started to run, but the entangling grasses tripped them and sent them sprawling. They quickly scrambled to their feet and hurried on.

When the wolves scented their prey, they started

with full speed in pursuit. A threatening cry came from the edge of the wood. Terrified, the children looked back, but they were too far away to see the great lone wolf that leaped from cover.

Suddenly there was a swish of heavy bodies through the wild rice. Wolves, huge and gray, were stealing through the rank grass, their eyes shining brightly in the darkness. Silently, they were following the trail of the two young hunters.

The moon was at the full, and the boys could plainly see that there was still a wide expanse of clearing stretching out before them. The ground became swampy, and they had to leap from tussock to tussock as they zigzagged over the marshy land to the giant trees beyond.

Being hunted by wolves set the boys' hearts to beating wildly and started the blood rushing through their veins. Their nerves tingled with excitement, when, behind them, they heard the soft, dull thud of padded feet. Twigs crackled and leaves rustled as the wolves came coursing after them. The boys looked back; their frightened eyes saw great shaggy beasts with wide-open mouths, red tongues, and sharp white fangs.

The leader of the pack, a fierce-eyed wolf, came on with leaps and bounds. He made a dart at Little White Savage, who was lagging behind, terribly scared. Achilles could think of only one way to fill those wide-open jaws. Suddenly he threw his rabbit into the

mouth of the greedy wolf. The beast promptly gobbled it up. A single rabbit was too small a morsel, however, to satisfy the wolf's fierce hunger. Again it sprang at Achille. He felt its hot breath on his naked body, and heard the sharp click of its great teeth.

Only the bravery of Little Red Savage enabled Achille to escape the greedy jaws which snapped so hungrily. As the wolf leaped at Little White Savage, Scandawatti turned and fired a bullet into its head. Instantly the wolves rushed on their dead leader and tore him to pieces.

Then Achille and Scandawatti ran as they had never run before. They heard the yelps and howls of the wolves, as they clawed and tore ferociously at the body of the dead animal. Every shred of flesh and fur was eaten. Then the pack stopped to fight over the bones of their dead comrade; later they again took up the chase.

When the two boys heard the patter of feet and knew that the wolves were again on their trail, they turned, stood side by side, and fired into the yelping, snarling pack. Two of the fierce, gray beasts stopped in their tracks and howled in their death agony. The pack wheeled, and with snapping jaws sprang upon the dying wolves.

When the wolves again stopped to feast on the slain, the boys once more took to their heels. Their eyes swept the edge of the dark wood. They must

reach the shelter of the forest, where the wide-spreading branches of the mammoth trees offered them a safe shelter.

When it grew late, and Achille and Scandawatti were still absent, Du Lhut and De Montigny became uneasy.

"I fear the big timber wolves," said Du Lhut, as he walked restlessly up and down before the camp fire.

Soon darkness fell, and the woodrangers could hear the howling and yelping of the wolves as they raced across the clearing. When Du Lhut and De Montigny heard wolf call to wolf, they sprang for their guns, and started on a run through the forest.

Antoine snatched a flaming brand from the camp fire, as did many of the woodrangers, and followed after. When the men reached the big trees that bordered the clearing, they heard shots. With cries of encouragement they sprang from out the shadows of the trees. Not far away, they saw the wolves in pursuit of the children, whose slender limbs were trembling with terror.

"Throw yourselves flat on the ground," shouted Du Lhut.

The wolves were now so close that with a single leap they could snap up the frail bodies of the boys. Suddenly there was a volley of shots. The starving wolves answered with yelps of pain.

Clinging to hummocks of tough marsh grass, Achille

and Scandawatti had let their bodies sink into the black muck of the swamp. They heard the shouts of their friends, as the searchers fired into the yelping pack and with their flaming brands drove the fierce wolves back.

Soon the boys were lifted from their miry bed and carried to the blazing camp fire.

The wolves that had escaped the bullets of the *coureurs de bois* once more fought over the bodies of the slain; then, with noiseless steps, they followed on the trail of the woodrangers. They circled through the trees, but as they were frightened by the leaping flames, they hid themselves in the deep shadows.

Du Lhut and De Montigny praised, scolded, and petted Achille and Scandawatti when they heard the boys' story. François took Little White Savage on his knee. "I'll be glad to get you safely home," he grumbled. "If I have you under my care very long, I'll be gray before my time."

"Bravery and pluck are good qualities," interposed Du Lhut, "but caution is needed to make a warrior. The warriors of the Iroquois," he continued, drawing Little Red Savage to him, "are cunning, but they are always careful. They never risk their lives needlessly. Among the People of the Long House, even great warriors fear the big timber wolves."

"They do," said Scandawatti, "but the howling of these wolves didn't come to our ears until we were half-

way across the clearing. If we had been in the forest we would have taken shelter among the branches of the big trees."

"That would have been fine," growled François. "If we had not found you before morning, I should have been crazy."

"Come little ones," called Antoine, who did not want the children scolded. "You must be hungry after your long tramp in the woods. Here is your supper." And he handed them bowls filled with steaming broth.

The two boys were seated in the midst of the circle of dark-skinned coureurs de bois, who squatted around the blazing camp fire, eating heartily of roasted venison and stewed wildfowl. Achille and Scandawatti were proud to be in the company of these French wood-runners—as brave men as ever roamed the pathless forests of North America.

After the remains of the meal had been cleared away, the coureurs de bois lay in the light of the blazing logs, smoking their pipes, and occasionally sending a shot into the circle of gaunt wolves that crouched in the darkness.

"Come," said Du Lhut to Scandawatti, "sing us the Wolf Song of the Iroquois."

The graceful body of Little Red Savage swayed to the rhythmic measures of the melody, as he began singing the Wolf Song of his people. He danced backward and forward between the leaping flames and the

wolves—now advancing, now receding, closing each verse with plaintive howling.

As his mournful “Wah-oo-ah-oo-ah-oo” died away, Little White Savage gave screams of delight, when Scandawatti, uttering piercing shrieks, jumped from within the safe circle of the camp fire, and jerking fire-brands from the living coals threw them far into the wood among the wolves.

As the flaming brands thrown by Scandawatti fell among the savage beasts which skulked about the camp, the wolves gave yelps of pain and fright, then tumbled over one another as they leaped about in their anxiety to escape. They sought shelter in the deeper shadows, and there their presence was revealed only by their fiery eyes. At a safe distance they sat back on their haunches and licked their chops as they kept watch upon the woodrangers. Whenever one of those got up to throw more fuel upon the blazing fire, the big wolves moved about uneasily. They feared the leaping flames and the cries of the little Indian dancer far more than they feared bullets and were kept at bay only by the circle of blazing fires.

The fires were kept up all night, even until early dawn when faint streaks of light showed in the east. Then, one by one, the wolves slunk away.



CHAPTER IX

THE TWO BOYS SPOIL THE KILL OF THE WOODRANGERS

THE Frenchmen had no way of knowing how far they were behind the Mohawks, whose trail they had crossed. They only knew that the best plan for them was to follow the trail of the Indians. They decided, therefore, to leave their boats behind, and to hide them in the thickets at the edge of the river. The next morning, when the brave little company started on the journey to Quebec, each man carried a pack on his back. The woodrangers had a good stock of dried meat and dried fish to take with them. They also carried cloth and trinkets, which they hoped to use in trade with the roving bands of Hurons and Algonquins who sometimes ventured this far on their hunting trips.

When the *coureurs de bois* stopped to hunt and fish, Achille and Scandawatti romped in the woods or waded and splashed in the shallows of the St. Lawrence. Since their adventure with the timber wolves, however, they always hastened back to camp so soon as twilight darkened the forest paths.

One night when all were sitting around the camp fire, they heard the loud call of a bull moose which bellowed defiance to all its rivals.

"Let's get that fellow," cried De Montigny, reaching for his gun. Instantly the woodrangers were on their feet, getting their weapons in readiness.

"And the little ones?" asked Antoine, when he saw the boys preparing to follow.

"They may come with me. I shall see to their safety," said Du Lhut. "And you, François," he turned to De Montigny, "will you go with me to the river bank?"

"Yes. There is a good hiding place among the willows yonder. But these little ones?" he questioned, pushing Achille and Scandawatti ahead of him into the forest. "I am afraid they'll wander off and either get lost or frighten away our game."

"There's a great oak some distance back from the river bank. They can hide among its branches," answered Du Lhut. "When we have bagged our game we'll know where to find them."

With the aid of a friendly boost from the woodrangers, the two boys climbed into the oak and found a comfortable resting place against its thick limbs.

"You may use your bow and arrow if you see any game worth while," Du Lhut said to the boys as he left them, "but under no circumstances are you to fire your pistols."

Achille and Scandawatti had feelings of disappointment at being so entirely left out of the hunting of the bull moose, whose hoarse bellow came to their ears again and again.

"I wonder how long we'll be kept prisoners in this tree," grumbled Achille.

Scandawatti made no answer. His eyes were fixed on a fox that had thrust its head out of a thicket.

The night birds were now abroad. The two boys heard the twittering of wood mice change to frightened squeaks when a great owl swooped down and carried off one of the frolicking little creatures. Then a faint scratching among the dried leaves came to their ears. They peered cautiously from their hiding place.

Little Red Savage thought he saw a dark body glide over the ground. As he stared into the gloom, he saw something move. He laid a warning hand on Achille's arm, then slid noiselessly to the ground. Moving swiftly, he was soon in the shelter of a vine-covered stump. From there he crept to a huge rock not far from the oak tree. Flattening himself against its smooth side, he crouched motionless, and spied with the sharp vision of an Indian child.

Suddenly the keen eyes of Little Red Savage saw the long, slim body of a crouching animal pad softly over the fallen leaves. To bring himself closer, Scandawatti moved to the shelter of a juniper thicket and hid in its shadow.

The Indian boy's breath came faster when a slanting moonbeam showed him that the crouching animal was a great, gray lynx, with tufted ears, and eyes that blazed like coals of fire. The glittering eyes of Little Red Savage followed every movement of the big lynx. He was no coward, this descendant of great warriors, but Du Lhut's warning, that he must be cautious as well as brave, had not been lost on him.

The lynx was hungry; it had eaten nothing all day and the sharp gnawings of hunger made it ferocious. As it lay there in the shadow, every sense alert to the whisperings of the forest, a distant sound came to its ears. Some night prowler was chasing a deer. The deer was coming this way. The lynx's eyes had a savage light in them, as it turned and leaped into a mass of thick-growing hemlock. It crouched deeper and deeper into the shadows, until its great humped body rested against the young saplings.

After the woodrangers had seen that the two boys were safely hidden in the branches of the great oak, they stationed themselves at intervals along the river bank. Here the shore was thick-wooded, except for one place where a dent in the shore line invited the growth of reeds and cat-tails.

Not far from this reedy shallow Du Lhut and De Montigny hid themselves, and, guns in hand, they stood under the fringing branches of a great willow where the ground sloped gently to the river.

As Du Lhut stepped out to examine the tracks of the different animals that had come to drink, he heard a warning rattle, and, jumping backward, landed on a snake which lay coiled there. He crushed its head into the soft earth with his heels, and again crouched back into the shadow. He heard the call of a cow moose and knew she was not far distant.

The answering call of the bull moose came from deep in the forest, as it hurried to meet its mate. Though great in bulk, it moved with wonderful lightness, making no sound, until, with a snort of anger, it lowered its head when a stag leaped across the trail.

A panther, with stealthy step, was on the trail of the deer. The bull moose, quick to sense the approach of prowling animals of the night, hurried with incredible swiftness through the forest.

The coureurs de bois, whose rifles were ever ready, waited the approach of the bull moose. Du Lhut had given orders to let the cow moose escape; like the Indians, he didn't believe in wasteful killing. The bull moose would be enough for their needs.

The eyes of Du Lhut and De Montigny were on the cow moose. She was standing in the shallows. Suddenly she jumped to one side, and with a snort of fear plunged into the thickets. The same wind that brought the scent of the panther to her, wafted the scent of the hunters to the nostrils of the bull moose, which was concealed in the thicket close at hand.

The little eyes of the bull moose flamed with rage as he charged through the thickets into the shallows and floundered among the cat-tails.

Du Lhut and De Montigny raised their guns to shoot. Just then they heard the sharp crack of a pistol, and a wailing cry that quickly became a shriek. On a run they started for the oak tree where they had left the two boys.

When the lynx heard the rapid beat of hoofs that signaled the approach of the frightened deer, it slid out from the shelter of the hemlocks and crouched close to the ground. Then, as the stag broke from cover, the lynx sprang straight upward, missing the slender neck, but sinking its claws into the stag's heaving side.

At the same instant the panther hurled itself from out the shadows. Instead of clutching the deer, however, the panther landed on the body of the lynx. Screeching with rage, both tumbled to the ground. Freed from its burden, the frightened stag plunged into the forest, while the panther and the lynx caught and tore at each other with their ripping claws.

The screeching, snarling animals were a whirling bundle of fur when Scandawatti slipped from his hiding place and let fly two arrows. The first struck the lynx a glancing blow on the head. The brute stretched out, apparently lifeless. The second buried itself in the panther's shoulder.

The panther let go its hold on the lynx and sprang into the shadows of the great oak. It looked about for the new enemy, its eyes sparkling with rage. At once it perceived the crouching form of Little White Savage among the branches above. With a snarl the brute sprang at Achille. He fired in haste, and the shot struck the panther in the chest. Achille then threw himself to one side to avoid the wounded panther, which landed so close that it raked his shoulders and back with the frantic sweep of its claws.

The trunk of the big oak had shielded the panther from Scandawatti, who now sprang forward, fired his pistol, and gave the animal its death wound. Too weak to retain its hold on the tree, it clawed and tore wildly at the rough bark as it came tumbling to the ground.

While the panther was struggling in a death agony, Little Red Savage turned and fired an arrow at the lynx, which had meantime recovered and was now taking a flying leap into the forest. The arrow pierced its heart as its long slender body was clearing the thickets. The dying wail of the lynx sounded like the agonized cry of a child, and it was with white faces that Du Lhut and De Montigny sprang into the open.

Achille dropped from the tree and stood beside Scandawatti. Facing Du Lhut, De Montigny, and all the other woodrangers who had heard the wailing cry, the boys stood close beside the dead panther.

Du Lhut breathed a sigh of relief when he saw that the boys were unhurt. Then he grew angry.

"And just for the pleasure of killing this panther you spoiled our kill."

"It sprang at me and I had to shoot," protested Achille.

"I wounded the panther, and in its rage it attacked my brother," said Little Red Savage.

"And who killed this tuft-eared lynx?" asked Antoine, lifting the carcass from the thicket and laying it beside that of the panther.

"I killed it," said Scandawatti, as he pulled his arrow from the lynx and wiped it on the moss of the oak tree.

"This is a fine animal," said De Montigny, who was so glad the boys were unhurt that the loss of the bull moose seemed a trifle.

"Yes, but it doesn't give us fresh meat," grumbled Du Lhut, who laughed when he saw the crestfallen looks of the boys. Grasping an arm of each, he said, "After all, you weren't to blame. Here friends," said he, motioning to some of the *coureurs de bois*, "let's strip the skins from these carcasses. They're worth something, anyway." And with great skill and quickness the skins of the panther and the lynx were removed and rolled into bundles for the men to carry.

Achille winced when De Montigny put an arm about his shoulders, as they started back to camp.

"What's the matter?" asked De Montigny. "Are you cold?"

"No, but the panther's claws have torn my back and shoulders."

"Well, it did claw you!" exclaimed De Montigny, as he caught sight of the deep gashes in the child's flesh.

"As soon as we get back to camp I'll make a poultice that will take out the soreness," said Scandawatti, who was hurrying along with Antoine.

When they reached camp, Antoine raked the live embers together, threw on some pine splinters, and soon had a good fire going.

Many sunflowers grew at the edge of the camp. Scandawatti uprooted several of those, cut off the roots, washed them carefully, and then crushed them to a pulp between two stones.

When Achille and De Montigny reached camp, Little Red Savage had ready a poultice of sunflower roots. He bound this on the aching scratches that showed blood-red on the back and shoulders of Little White Savage.

"Oh, but that feels good," exclaimed Achille, when the cooling poultice was laid on his wounds.

"Come and lie down and try to sleep," said Antoine to the boys, who were by this time drooping with weariness. "Day is breaking now and it is not worth while for the rest of us to try to sleep. Come, here is a good bed for you." And he began piling some spruce boughs close to the fire. When he had thrown



"Instantly the wolves rushed on their dead leader."

the hide of the bear over them it made a resting place too inviting to resist. Achille and Scandawatti lay down and were soon fast asleep.

When the boys awoke, the sun was high in the heavens. Most of the woodrangers had gone hunting or fishing, but several were lounging around the camp-fire.

"Come and have some of these fine steaks," said big Jean Ribaut, who was broiling meat in front of the fire.

"Who has made a killing this morning?" asked Little Red Savage, seating himself on a log and waiting expectantly for his breakfast.

"Two of our best hunters provided this meat," said Jean, with a wink at Antoine, who was just then placing thin slices of meat on a drying frame.

"Yes, and it's the best meat we've had since we were with the Onondagas and ate the juicy hump steaks cut from the buffaloes," said Antoine.

"It smells very good," said Little White Savage. "What kind of meat is it?"

"Never mind what kind it is," returned Jean. "Just try this," and he handed each of the boys a broiled steak on a clean piece of bark.

Rich juices oozed out as the boys' sharp teeth bit out mouthfuls.

"It is the flesh of the lynx," said Little Red Savage, and he laughed, as he looked slyly at Jean Ribaut.

"Is it truly lynx meat?" asked Little White Savage.

"Yes," said Antoine kindly, "and you two brave little ones have provided a fine treat for us. When I was with the Algonquin Indians I learned to like the flesh of the lynx."

Jean Ribaut chuckled as he took note of the expression on the faces of Achille and Scandawatti, who now glanced proudly around at the woodrangers. Some of the men had been very cross over the loss of the big bull moose.

The boys were in a fine way to be spoiled because of the killing they had made, for when evening came, and all the woodrangers had gathered around the camp fire to eat their evening meal, the men were of one mind as to the excellent flavor of the lynx meat.

"When will you go hunting again?" asked Du Lhut. As he asked the question he looked at the two boys and laughed.

"Never, I hope," exclaimed De Montigny. "They're always getting into scrapes of one kind or another. We'll shut you up in a cave the next time we go hunting," he said to them.

Scandawatti and Achille looked at each other and laughed. They were glad their adventure had been the means of providing fresh meat for the men. They had felt keenly the disappointment expressed by the woodrangers over the escape of the big bull moose, and it restored their self-respect to hear these famous

hunters and trappers acknowledge that they, though mere children, had taken their turn in providing fresh meat for the camp.

A few days of hunting and fishing gave the woodrangers a good supply of meat and fish. They dried a supply of each, but the shrinking caused by drying greatly lessened the quantity.

They had but little salt left, and therefore they had to use it sparingly. Many of the *coureurs de bois*, who lived for months at a time among the various tribes of Indians who were allies of the French, cared but little for salt. They found a good substitute for it in a plant which they burnt to fine ashes, which were then spread on fish and meat.

Little Red Savage refused to put salt on his meat, though urged to do so by Little White Savage.

"The red men never eat salt on their meat," he said decidedly.

"But, if you would use it just once, you never would eat meat without it."

"It isn't good. It's bitter," protested Scandawatti.

Achille turned to Du Lhut. "Why don't the Indians like salt on their meat?"

"I don't know why they don't; but I have traveled from one end of the country to the other visiting the different tribes of Indians, and I've always found that no Indian likes salt with his food."



CHAPTER X

ACHILLE AND SCANDAWATTI JOIN IN A GAME OF HIDE AND SEEK

DU LHUT and his woodrangers were following the trail close to the St. Lawrence, so as to keep watch over that highway of travel. The scouts, whom Du Lhut had sent out, brought back news that they had found a deserted camp which showed that the Mohawks had stopped long enough to build canoes. Now they were doubtless making their way up the river to Montreal, the nearest French settlement. Du Lhut knew the cunning of these ferocious warriors of the Iroquois, and he was fully aware that they would watch and wait for weeks in the hope of capturing him and his companions.

It was now autumn. Maple and oak were flaming with red and yellow. Blustering winds beat the dead leaves off the wild shrubs and sent them fluttering along the trail. White breasted ducks, journeying southward, rose from the marshes with a loud squawking whenever the *coureurs de bois* approached the swamps in which the wildfowl took refuge while they rested.

On one such occasion the arrows flew from Scandawatti's bow, and wild ducks came tumbling down to right and left. The woodrangers carefully picked their way through the swamp, and gathered up the ducks which had fallen among the grasses or amid the water plants of the marsh. When Little Red Savage had killed enough of the wildfowl for supper, the woodrangers stripped the birds of their feathers and put them on to cook.

While the men were preparing the evening meal, the two boys threw themselves down under some drooping willows, glad of a chance to rest.

"You live far, far in the North Country," said Little Red Savage with a sigh of weariness, as he stretched himself out beside Little White Savage.

"Yes, it is a long journey to my home. I wonder who owns all the land over which we have traveled?" As he spoke, Little White Savage sat up and glanced back at the dark rim of the forest.

"No one has any right to call the earth his," retorted Scandawatti indignantly. "It was given to all and it is free to all, just as the sunlight and air."

"But the Iroquois claim miles and miles of country," said Achille.

"Yes, they claim that it is their right to hunt game over the land, but they don't claim the land itself. The Great Chief of Men, who dwells in the sky, has given the earth to all his children."

Little White Savage clasped his hands around his knees and drew them up against his breast. He swayed back and forth as he looked thoughtfully into the face of Little Red Savage. But the problem was too big for Achille to solve. If the Iroquois didn't lay claim to the land, they kept the other tribes out of it, so where was the difference?

Antoine's voice broke into the child's reverie. "Come, little ones! I have filled your bowls and they are ready for you." So the two boys hastened to join the *coureurs de bois* who were already seated around the steaming kettle.

In arranging their camp for the night, the woodrangers had used an immense fallen tree for a wind-break. Sheltered from the wind by its huge trunk, the two boys bent over their steaming bowls and listened to the talk and laughter of the light-hearted Frenchmen. When they had eaten their fill, they leaned back against the big tree in drowsy content.

"Look, little ones!" cried Antoine, pointing toward the forest where multitudes of fireflies flashed their twinkling lights in the black shadows.

While the woodrangers smoked their pipes, the two boys caught fireflies, tied them together with tough grasses, and wound the glittering wreaths around their heads. The wriggling bugs flashed their bright light on the dark faces of the playful little fellows, who, in childish glee, romped in the light of the camp fire.

When the *coureurs de bois* started out the next morning they made a wide circuit to avoid the swamp.

As they drew near to Montreal the trails broadened, for the French settlement, though small, was an important trading post. Hurons and Ottawas—two tribes who feared the Iroquois—brought their furs down the Ottawa River to Montreal, there to trade them for ammunition, knives, and cloth.

One day, as the French woodrangers were traveling the well-beaten trail beside the river, they heard the dip of paddles. Peering through the bushes that lined the bank of the stream, they saw a number of canoes filled with Indians. These were making their way up the river.

"They are Hurons," said Du Lhut. He stepped out of the brush toward the river bank and called a friendly greeting to those in the foremost canoes.

The eyes of Little Red Savage narrowed as he watched the approach of the Hurons. He knew that those redskins belonged to a race which was always at war with the Iroquois, his own people.

As the canoes came close to the shore, the Hurons jumped into the water and drew the light frail boats far up on the bank.

Hurons and Frenchmen soon seated themselves beneath the trees, and presently the peace pipe went the rounds. Then they talked over the treaty of peace which had been made with the tribes of the Iroquois.

"Did the French Father make a treaty of peace with the Iroquois for themselves only, or does it include the Hurons, their friends and allies?" asked the Huron chief, addressing Du Lhut.

"Our noble governor would not desert our Indian friends. The treaty is with the Hurons as well as with the French. But the Clan of the Bear among the Mohawks has declared war on the French, so you, too, must beware of those fierce Iroquois warriors. Even now their canoes may be floating on the St. Lawrence. We must be watchful, as we are now approaching Montreal. If their boats are not on the river, the Mohawks are hiding in the forest waiting for a chance to strike. These are the terms and conditions of the treaty of peace we have made with the Iroquois," continued Du Lhut, as he took from his pack the belts of wampum he had received from the different tribes of the Iroquois. Then he explained the meaning of the signs on each belt.

With grave faces the Hurons listened to Du Lhut's words. The Indians were never so impolite as to interrupt a speaker. No matter how much they resented what he had to say, they listened patiently until he had finished.

"When the council fires blazed in the village of the Onondagas, why were not all the tribes of the Iroquois represented?" asked the Huron chief, when Du Lhut finished his explanations.

"There is great unrest among all the tribes of the Iroquois," said Du Lhut gravely. "Many great warriors among the Five Tribes of the Iroquois were opposed to a treaty of peace with the French and their Indian allies."

"Then this period of quiet will not last long," said the Huron chief. "And when the Iroquois strike, it will be the Hurons who will be cut to pieces."

"The French will never desert their Indian allies," said Du Lhut. "But now, my brother, since we have met, let us do some trading. I see that you have some furs in your canoe; have you any beaver skins to trade for powder and lead?"

The Huron chief nodded his head. "We have a few skins left over from last winter's hunting," he said gravely. Then he gave orders to some of the young braves to bring the bundle of beaver pelts that lay in the bottom of his canoe. Soon Indians and Frenchmen were busy bargaining over the furs which the redskins spread out for inspection.

"The English and the Dutch give us double the amount of powder and lead that you offer for beaver skins," grumbled the Huron chief.

"Why don't you take your skins to the English and Dutch?" asked Du Lhut.

"Because the fierce Iroquois guard every trail to the English and Dutch settlements," explained the chief.

"We, as well as you, suffer from the attacks of the

Iroquois," retorted Du Lhut. "We can neither sow our fields with grain, nor reap our harvests, because of those daring and cunning warriors. We cannot afford to pay as much for our beaver skins as the English and Dutch pay for theirs. They are on friendly terms with the Iroquois. But I will pay you as much as any other Frenchman in Canada pays," and Du Lhut offered the chief some gaily colored beads, bright red cloth, and some powder and lead. Satisfied that Du Lhut was dealing fairly with him, the Huron chief handed over his beaver skins. His example was followed by many others.

While the French woodrangers followed the trail through the forest, the Hurons traveled by water; but when night came on they left the river and encamped with the *coureurs de bois*. They knew that the cunning Mohawks would not attack so large a force.

The French had built the little town of Montreal on an island located where the St. Lawrence River joins the Ottawa. When the *coureurs de bois* came to this island, they used the boats of the Hurons to land their little company. The sentinels at the fort, who were always on watch to guard against an attack by the Iroquois, announced the approach of the woodrangers and Indians, and so soon as their feet touched land they were surrounded by traders, trappers, women, and children.

Some of Du Lhut's woodrangers had their homes

in Montreal. When those drew their canoes up the sloping bank, they were clasped in the arms of their anxious wives, whose chief thought was one of joy at meeting their husbands who had once more escaped the scalping knives of the Iroquois. Great, indeed, was the joy of all who shared in the happy reunion.

The chief official of the little settlement of Montreal was called "governor," although he had no authority outside of Montreal. While Du Lhut hurried to the governor's home to pay his respects, many of the woodrangers hastened along the street of the little settlement, shouting greetings to their friends. Then they entered the wine shops, and those were soon doing a thriving business with the returned *coureurs de bois*.

Antoine took the two boys in his care and made his way through the crowd of curious bystanders, most of whom were children. Those were attracted by the bearing of Little Red Savage, who felt that in himself was represented the proud race of the Iroquois.

The Huron warriors, naked except for a loin cloth, wandered in and out of the wine shops. There they were treated with the same courtesy as was shown to the French trappers and hunters. The Huron squaws, who had accompanied the party, put up their tepees outside the stockade which surrounded the settlement.

Now that they had reached the stockaded town of Montreal, Antoine dreamed of no danger. As the two boys were now deep in an exciting game with the other

children, the old woodranger joined some friends in a game of chance in order to while away the time.

The children played until they were tired out and then threw themselves down beneath a tree near the gate of the stockade.

Soon a party of trappers came in and left the gate open, while one of their number went back to the boats for a bundle of furs.

Not far from the gate a Huron squaw had erected her tepee and made her camp fire.

"Let us go outside," said Little Red Savage. "I don't like to be shut up like this."

"You come, too," Achille said to the little French boys with whom they had been playing, and who were now lounging beneath the trees. The boys slipped out without attracting the attention of anyone, so when the trapper returned from the boat with his furs he closed the gate of the stockade without noticing that the children were outside.

The children ran to where some Huron boys were squatting around a fire popping corn. The little Huron, who was shaking the vessel over the blazing coals, took the pan from the fire, and, with the generosity natural to the Indian race, offered the popped corn to Achille and Scandawatti.

"I like the corn that flowers," said Little Red Savage, as his dark hand closed over the snow-white kernels.

"Let us have a game in the woods," said Achille, nodding toward the rim of the forest not far distant.

"What shall we play?" asked a sturdy French boy.

"Hide and seek," said Achille. "Scandawatti will be the one to hide, and we'll seek his hiding place in the forest."

"I'll wrap myself in the hide of the bear," thought Scandawatti, "so that I shall be harder to find." He went down to the Hurons' boats and found the bear-skin which Antoine had forgotten to take out. Then he went some distance into the woods and chose his hiding place in a thicket at the edge of the ravine.

Upon entering the thicket he found the charred stump of a tree, on which he sat to unroll the bear-skin. Within the bundle was the false face. A slight tremor shook the body of Little Red Savage when he took it in his hand. It was a powerful oki, but it had done him several good turns. A spirit of mischief prompted him to put it on. It would frighten the little Hurons who had been invited to join in the game.

As he was about to put on the hide of the black bear, a big, gray lynx stepped out on the open trail. An arrow flew from Scandawatti's bow and the big lynx stopped, lurched forward, and fell dead. After a while Scandawatti would strip off its hide. Now, however, he was listening and interpreting every sound that came to his ears.

Little Red Savage had tried in every way to hide his

trail, for he knew the Huron boys would be quick to read each misplaced twig and leaf. Now he wrapped himself in the hide of the black bear, put on the false face, and held his muscles quiet with the patience of the Indian people.

Meanwhile the French and Huron boys were searching for the trail of Little Red Savage. Achille, who had become separated from the others, found himself close beside a heap of stones and charred logs. This was all that remained of a cabin, which, several months before, had been burned by the Iroquois. It was close to a ravine that he would have to cross in order to reach the hiding place of Little Red Savage.

Suddenly Achille heard the prattle and laughter of a child, and saw a little French girl toddling after a squirrel. As he watched her, he detected a slight rustling, as of moccasined feet lightly treading the dead leaves. He dared not raise his head above the heap of charred logs for fear of being seen, but as he glanced along the piled up logs and stones, he saw a crevice through which he could look. Putting his eye to the crevice, he saw a plumed and painted Iroquois throw himself to the ground and creep forward.

The little girl was so intent on watching the antics of the squirrel, and followed so hard and so fast on the trail of the little gray creature, that in a very short time she was at the edge of the wood and almost within striking distance of the ugly-faced redskin. The

savage glared at her with the hungry look of a starved wolf, as he furtively watched her from the shelter of a fallen tree. He gloated over the child's rich clothing and the chain of bright gold around her neck, both of which were prizes that he longed to possess.

The Indian turned his head as though fearful of being discovered, and as he did so Achille saw that one side of his face was painted black, the other, blue. His head was adorned with a topknot of eagle feathers. Streaks of red and yellow paint encircled his naked body.

The redskin moved forward and slid into a hole left by an uprooted tree. When the child turned, as though about to go back to the stockade, he wriggled out of the hole and over the ground like a big striped snake, his undulating body showing now a glint of the red paint, now a glint of the yellow. The savage took advantage of every bump and hollow on the ground as a means of concealing his movements. As Achille's eyes followed the movements of the sinewy redskin, his ears took in every sound. Many different sounds were wafted to him from the fort. The laughter of women, the merry whistling of a young Frenchman who was jigging to his own music, the shouts of young children, and the barking of dogs.

He looked around to see if help were near and saw only some half-naked Hurons wandering here and there among the trees. Trained Indian hunters idly

smoking their pipes were standing outside the entrance to the stockade, speaking an occasional word to the soldiers on guard. Achille knew, however, that before they could come to his assistance the child would be either killed or taken captive.

The Mohawk, for he was one of the band whose trail the *coureurs de bois* had followed for weeks, was well concealed by the brush.

Every step the child took was bringing her nearer to the ravine. Hiding there in the shade of great pines and hemlocks, were the fierce Mohawks. No Indians were more courageous than these skulking Iroquois; none were more ferocious.

The young brave rose and took a few steps forward. There was no sound to alarm the child, for the Indian's feet seemed shod with down. He had hidden for days in the dark forest, and now he was advancing step by step in the shadow of the big trees that edged the wood. The sunshine flashed on the knife in his hand. Suddenly his shrill war whoop broke the silence, and with weapon uplifted he sprang toward the child.

The little girl trembled from head to foot when she heard the fierce cry. Then the war whoop of the young Mohawk was answered by a crackling shot from Achille's pistol. As the terrifying yell was repeated over and over again by the Mohawks hiding in the ravine, the young brave who had received his death wound fell dead at the feet of the little girl. The child

shrank back in terror from the hideous redskin, threw herself on the ground, and crept under a low-hanging bush.

When Achille saw that she was safely hidden, he started on a run for the fort. He had gone only a few steps when he was overtaken by a powerful Mohawk, who picked him up in his arms and sprang to the shelter of the big trees.

When Achille saw that the Mohawk belonged to the war party which had fled in terror of the Oki of the False Faces, he tried to cry out, but he was held so closely that he could make no sound.

Above the cries of the Mohawks he heard the screeches of the Huron women, who had been squatting in a circle around their camp fire, but who, at the first war whoop, scurried away through the tall grass, screaming for their children who had entered the wood only a short time before.





CHAPTER XI

WEARING THE FALSE FACE, LITTLE RED SAVAGE
APPEARS TO THE MOHAWKS

WHEN Du Lhut entered the presence of the governor of Montreal, he found there the Marquise de la Chayne, who had come to Canada because of her interest in the mission that had been established for the conversion of the savages. As the Marquise was related to both Du Lhut and Sieur de Casson, she and Du Lhut found much to talk about. When Du Lhut rose to go, a servant appeared at the door.

"Madame la Marquise, your little one, Hortense, has disappeared and cannot be found. No one has seen her, though the settlement has been carefully searched."

Just then the war cry of the Iroquois rang out. It was terrible, that long-drawn, terrifying war whoop, repeated over and over again.

The Marquise shrieked in terror, "Hortense, where are you?"

The war cry of the Iroquois was answered with shots from the fort, but above the rattle of firearms

could be heard the screams of the mothers who had discovered the absence of their little ones, and who felt sure that the children were in the clutches of the bloodthirsty Mohawks.

Du Lhut left the Marquise, who was crying and moaning in terror, and hastened toward the fort. On the way he met Antoine, who was seeking him.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Du Lhut, when he saw that Antoine was greatly agitated.

"Achille and Scandawatti!"

"Well, what of them?" asked Du Lhut impatiently. "They are safe inside the stockade."

"They are not to be found," answered Antoine, "and just now a Huron squaw told me that she saw a Mohawk warrior snatch up a French boy and disappear in the woods."

"Is it true that little Achille de Casson is missing?" asked François de Montigny, breathless with running.

"I'm afraid so," answered Du Lhut. "Call the *cour-ours de bois* together and we'll search the forest."

While François ran to the nearest wine shop to summon the woodrangers, Du Lhut went to the fort to ask assistance of the regular soldiers. Meanwhile, Antoine slipped into the little chapel close by, and vowed seven days' devotion to St. Joseph if Little White Savage should escape unhurt.

Scandawatti, who had been listening for the shouts of the French and Huron children, which would signify

that they had discovered his hiding place, heard instead the war cries of the Iroquois. The woods were filled with hideously painted redskins, but the Indians themselves were hidden from Little Red Savage by the dense forest growths. He listened for footsteps, but could hear none. Only faintly to his ears came the tolling of the chapel bell, a warning to those outside the stockade that they must seek the shelter of the fort.

Suddenly there came a din of crackling shots and cries. The war cry of the Iroquois sounded close to Scandawatti's ears. With shrill wild screeches the savages rushed toward his hiding place. Through the thickets, up the ravine, dashed the howling Mohawks.

Little Red Savage thrilled with excitement when a powerful Mohawk, holding Little White Savage in a tight embrace, leaped from out the shadows.

"Ho, ho! Ho, ho!" shrilled Little Red Savage, standing upright on the stump so that his head and shoulders appeared above the thicket. He wore the false face, which shone white and ghastly against the skin of the black bear.

The Mohawk glanced at the thicket. He saw the frightful manitou, he heard again the warning cry, "The Oki of the False Faces!" Then he stumbled over the carcass of the gray lynx that lay on the trail, and Little White Savage fell from his grasp. Thinking only of escape, the Mohawk hastened after his

companions, who plunged into the darkness of the wood, running as though all the okies and demons of the vast wilderness were at their heels.

With the disappearance of the frightened Mohawks a hush fell upon the woods. Then Little White Savage jumped to his feet and at that instant came face to face with Little Red Savage. Scandawatti had taken off the false face, and had dropped the hide of the black bear from his shoulders. As the boys stood breathless, staring into the windswept aisle of the gloomy wood, they were surrounded by the Huron and French children who had been hiding in the thickets, where they had crept at the first cry of the Mohawks.

To the coureurs de bois, who crashed through the underbrush in pursuit of the redskins, the shrill voices of the children sounded like music. Antoine was the first to reach Little White Savage. He picked him up in his arms and held him close. "Mon petit!" he murmured. "The good God saved you."

Others of the woodrangers clasped their own little ones. Du Lhut and De Montigny, when they saw that Achilles and Scandawatti were safe, led their men in pursuit of the fleeing Mohawks.

Little White Savage wriggled out of Antoine's grasp, and as his feet touched the ground he shouted, "I killed a Mohawk."

"It must be the redskin I saw lying at the edge of the wood," said Antoine.

Du Lhut, De Montigny, and their men came running back.

"The Mohawks have taken to their canoes and are out of reach of our guns," said Du Lhut as he stooped to pick up the bearskin which lay on the ground. When Du Lhut picked up the bearskin the false face fell from its folds. He turned to Scandawatti: "Now I know why the fierce Mohawks did not stay to give us battle. This false face has again served us well. I shall take it and the bearskin and show them to the governor.

"Come, men, you must hasten home. The mothers of these children are almost distracted with thinking that their little ones have been carried off by the Mohawks. I wonder what has become of the child of the Marquise de la Chayne. Did either of you see her?" he asked, and turned with a questioning look to Achille and Scandawatti.

Scandawatti shook his head in reply. Achille, without waiting to answer, slipped into the thickets that bordered the ravine, and disappeared for the moment.

When the *coureurs de bois*, soldiers, and children, with Du Lhut at their head, marched out of the ravine, they saw Little White Savage coming towards them. Clinging to his hand was the little child whose life he had saved when he shot the Mohawk.

"It is the little one they said was lost," cried one of the soldiers, at whom the child's nurse had often cast coquettish glances as she passed the fort.

"Where did you find her?" asked Du Lhut.

"She crawled under the bushes when I shot the Mohawk."

"The bad Indian was going to kill me with his big knife," said the little one.

"The wood was full of redskins. How did you escape capture by the Iroquois?" asked François.

"I was captured by a Mohawk," answered Achille, "but when he caught me up and ran into the forest, we passed a thicket, and as we did so Scandawatti frightened him with the false face. The Mohawk thought it was the Oki of the False Faces, so he dropped me and fled into the woods."

Du Lhut gave a glance of approval at Scandawatti. "You have shown great bravery and cunning, my lad. When you become a warrior you will not be afraid of a false face."

"There are many brave and cunning warriors among those fleeing Mohawks," said Scandawatti gravely, "but they fear the okies that wear false faces."

When Du Lhut carried the little daughter of the Marquise to her mother's lodgings, he took Achille and Scandawatti with him, too.

The Marquise was speechless with emotion when she first held the child in her embrace. When she had somewhat recovered herself, she turned to Du Lhut. "My cousin, it is to you that I owe this happiness."

"It is to this little one you owe the safety of your child. He is the son of Sieur de Casson, and is your cousin as well as mine."

"That — my cousin?" She was going to say, "That savage," but stopped when she looked into the big brown eyes of Achille.

The two boys had discarded their buckskin suits and were wearing only a strip of cloth about their hips. There was the pride of race in the bearing of each, however, and they were not a bit embarrassed when they came face to face with this great lady from the Court of Versailles.

"It does not seem possible that this child saved the life of my little one. Tell me about it," she said, drawing Achille to her side.

"I killed the Mohawk. It was nothing."

At this moment the little daughter of the Marquise made herself heard. "A great big Indian stood over me with his knife, Mama."

The Marquise clasped the little girl close. She would have been childless if this little one had been taken. Then she put her arm around Achille and drew him close to her. A wistful look came into the great brown eyes of Little White Savage, for the Marquise recalled to him his mother, over the picture of whom he had often lingered.

Just then there was a rattling at the door, and François entered hurriedly. He turned to Du Lhut.

"The governor has just learned that we traded with the Hurons for their beaver skins, and he is furious. He swears that we shall not leave this island until our packs have been overhauled and the beaver skins handed over to him."

"To whom did he make this threat?" demanded Du Lhut, reddening with anger.

"To the commander of the fort. Antoine overheard the conversation. Under the pretense of entertaining us, he is going to give a dance tonight. While we are enjoying the festivities, our packs will be seized, searched, and robbed of the skins."

A grim smile lighted Du Lhut's dark face. "The governor will have to dance to his own music tonight. Come!" He motioned to the two boys to follow him.

The Marquise leaned forward and pressed her lips to the cheek of Little White Savage. "Remember," she said, as she embraced him, "if ever you are in need of a friend, come to me."

When night came on, the sentinel at the fort was pleased beyond measure that Antoine offered to keep watch for him while he ate his evening meal. As Antoine stood in the tower, erected at the corner of the fort for a lookout, the *coureurs de bois* brought him their bundles of beaver skins. One by one he dropped them outside the wall of the fort, and friendly Hurons picked them up and noiselessly carried them to their canoes.

The governor and his friends waited impatiently for the appearance of the coureurs de bois. At length the governor grew suspicious and sent for them. But all the woodrangers had disappeared. No one could give any satisfactory explanation for their sudden departure.

The Hurons, too, had vanished. Pursuit would have been hopeless. The governor, however, threatened dire punishment if Du Lhut or any of his followers should ever again enter Montreal.

The woodrangers had taken to the river, for the Hurons were glad to give up their canoes to the coureurs de bois in exchange for tobacco and cloth.

"We'll soon be in sight of your home," said Du Lhut to Achille, as the oars flashed swiftly in the hands of the woodrangers, who sent the boats forward rapidly.

A flush came into the face of Little White Savage when they rounded the bend of the river and came in sight of the stockade village which stood on the great estate, or seigniory, of Sieur de Casson. The gate of the stockade, which lay near the river, was open, and in front of it, safely moored, was a large number of canoes.

"I had forgotten," said Du Lhut, "that this is the day when the tenants on the seigniories come up to the households of their overlords to pay their respects and to receive their instructions for work during the coming year."

The sentinel at the stockade gate, who had been looking toward the forest, just at this moment turned his gaze toward the river. His loud shouts now brought everyone near at hand on the seigniory running to the river bank.

Sieur de Casson hastened from the manor house to greet his only son. He would scarcely let him out of his arms, even to bid the *coureurs de bois* welcome.

Little Red Savage looked curiously around the stockaded enclosure. He saw a fort of logs well fortified to resist the attacks of his people, the Iroquois. The manor house, too, was evidently built for defense, as the lower part was of stone and the upper part of wood.

There was a loud squawking by numerous chickens, tied in pairs, which had been brought by the tenants as offerings due their overlord. Geese and ducks, too, added to the uproar, but above all could be heard the chatter and laughter of men, women, and children. The day on which the tenants of this seigniory paid their respects to Sieur de Casson was always a day of feasting and merrymaking.

"Scandawatti saved me from being captured by the Mohawks," Achilles had whispered in his father's ear, and the greeting Little Red Savage received from Sieur de Casson helped him to bear the longing that rose within him to see again the lodges of his own people.

While the two boys joined the other children in

their sports, Du Lhut, François de Montigny, and Sieur de Casson sought an upper room in the mansion. Jean, the old servant, followed soon after, bearing a tray with a bottle of wine and some glasses.

"Achille whispered to me that the little Onondaga saved him from the Mohawks," said Sieur de Casson. "Tell me about that and the other happenings on your journey to the country of the Iroquois."

There were many questions asked and answered, so that it was late in the night when the conversation ended. Then Sieur de Casson and his guests sought their beds.

The next morning Du Lhut and his coureurs de bois loaded their canoes and again took to the river. Sieur de Casson and Achille accompanied them to the river bank to watch their departure. Du Lhut and Sieur de Casson conversed earnestly.

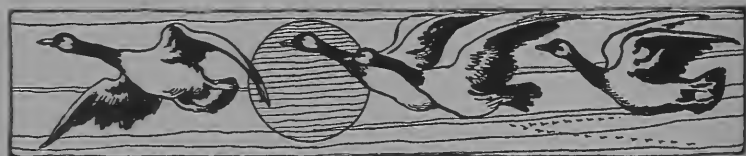
"I am carrying the little Onondaga to Quebec as a hostage for the keeping of the peace pact between the French and the Onondagas," Du Lhut said in a low tone. "It will be an unsafe place for him if the Iroquois take up the hatchet against the French."

"Bring him back here to me," urged Sieur de Casson.

"I will, if we have war with the Iroquois," answered Du Lhut, "but now I must take him to Quebec to see the governor there."

When the boats pushed off, Sieur de Casson took Achille's hand and led him to one of the watchtowers

facing the river. As the boat bearing Scandawatti reached the bend of the river, Little Red Savage stood upright in the canoe and shouted the war whoop of the Iroquois. He was answered by Little White Savage, whose clear, shrill voice waked the echoes with a cry of farewell. For a moment, the two boys faced each other, then the forest intervened.





CHAPTER XII

SCANDAWATTI MEETS THE DWARF

AS soon as Du Lhut arrived in Quebec he went to see the governor, and took Scandawatti with him. As he wanted to talk over his trip to the country of the Onondagas, he left Little Red Savage on the gallery of the governor's chateau while he himself went into the governor's office. From there the little Indian could get a good view of Quebec and the river. At that time Quebec was not much of a town. Besides the dwelling houses, there was a church, a convent, a fort, and a school for priests. These buildings were perched high on a great cliff, and below, at the water's edge, was a group of buildings where the French traders kept their stores of supplies.

Boats big and little were floating on the waters of the bay. In the midst of them was anchored the big vessel that had recently come from France. The great ship was a sight which Little Red Savage could never forget. It was the first time he had ever seen a ship, though he had heard the warriors of the Iroquois tell of the wonderful canoes with great white wings. At

the boat landing, he saw canoes filled with Hurons and Algonquins who had brought furs to exchange for beads, cloth, and ammunition.

Coming up the narrow street, which led from the lower to the upper town, were naked, lithe figures, their heads adorned with feathers, their bodies streaked with paint. Most of those were redskins, but among them were some Frenchmen who had adopted the manners and dress of the Indians.

Walking behind these men came a dwarf, the queerest creature Scandawatti had ever seen. His skin was so dark it might well have been called black. Besides, it was so glossy that it almost shone. His back was as broad as that of a man, but his legs were short, feeble, and crooked. He walked with a queer sidling motion that at first sight prompted one to laugh at him.

When the dwarf reached the top of the hill and saw Little Red Savage, he began rolling his eyes, tossing his head back and forth to one side and the other, and shifting his legs about in a singular manner. His appearance was so comical that Scandawatti couldn't help laughing. This seemed to please the dwarf, for he kicked and danced more wildly than ever so soon as he saw that he was attracting attention by means of his antics.

The governor, with Du Lhut at his side, stepped out on the balcony. "That queer looking creature you see

there," the governor said, "belongs to *Sieur de Casson*. He came on the vessel which arrived from France yesterday. He is a present to *Sieur de Casson* from his sister, the Countess de Fiesque, and bears a letter from her."

"A beautiful present," laughed Du Lhut as the dwarf turned towards him and he caught sight of the ill-shaped creature's broad flat nose and kinky hair. "And yet—it is quite the fashion for the ladies of the court to have these negro dwarfs as attendants."

"Yes, so I have heard," said the governor. "But I have an idea that this one was sent over here so that his masters might be rid of him. However, I'll look after him until *Sieur de Casson* arrives in Quebec."

Much to Du Lhut's relief, *Sieur de Casson* made his appearance a few days later. Of course he brought Achille with him, no less to see the village of Quebec than to visit Scandawatti. The latter had many interesting tales to tell Little White Savage. No sooner had Achille arrived than the two began to plan what they should do during the visit of *Sieur de Casson* and his son.

At the outset the dwarf was handed over to his new master. Such a strange black creature attracted much attention, for at this time there were but few slaves in Canada. This one attracted attention because of his black skin and comical figure. Wherever he went or was taken he was followed by a curious crowd.

The dwarf looked keenly at *Sieur de Casson* when he handed him his letter. *Sieur de Casson* read the letter and then handed it to *Du Lhut* to read. It ran as follows:

My dear brother:

The servants' quarters are so crowded that I think it best to dispose of this slave, and I beg you to accept him. I should give him the freedom of the woods if I were you. I am sure his health will be greatly benefited by it.

Du Lhut nodded understandingly, then turned to the dwarf. "Take the young *Iroquois* out for a walk, and see that no harm comes to him." He walked to the door with *Scandawatti* and the dwarf. When he returned to the room where he had left *De Casson*, he went to his desk and took out some letters. "There is more in this than you think. The vessel which came in last week brought you several letters. Among them I think you will find one from your sister."

"Yes, here is one," and *De Casson* read aloud:

"The dwarf I am sending you is the most treacherous creature ever put on this earth. I am afraid to keep him here any longer. He spies on all of us, and as we have strong enemies at court it is not safe to have such a creature about. I cannot have him killed,

although I have been advised to do so. It surely would be no sin if you should turn him loose in the forest.

"If he should be carried off by wild beasts or the Indians, it would be a good riddance."

Du Lhut laughed. "She is putting him off her conscience onto yours. However, I can see how such a creature might cause untold trouble, if he became acquainted with important secrets."

"He has a cunning face, and his eyes have a mean and impish look which I don't like," said *Sieur de Casson*. "There is nothing to be done, however, but to take him to my seigniory and there see how kindness and fair treatment will affect him."

"The *coureurs de bois* will make short work of him if they catch him at any of his tricks," said Du Lhut. "However, there will be little chance for him to exercise his evil talents on your seigniory. Perhaps he will like forest life, and spend a large part of his time in the woods."

"He will be worse than useless to me," continued *Sieur de Casson*. "I am glad, though, that the sea is between him and my sister. These strange creatures are sometimes very cunning, and I can imagine that he might acquire such knowledge as to make him dangerous. The first thing to do is to burn this letter. From now on I shall take care that my private papers

are kept safe from his prying eyes." So saying, De Casson dropped the letter onto the logs blazing in the big fireplace, and watched it burn to ashes.

Presently there was a light rap at the door; a servant admitted Antoine and Achille. Then, before the door could be closed, Scandawatti and the dwarf made their appearance.

Achille had never before seen a negro, so now he stared with wonder at the kinky hair, black skin, and squat figure of the dwarf. Antoine, too, looked curiously at the strange being.

"Take the children out to the garden and watch them at their play," *Sieur de Casson* said to the dwarf.

"Do not go outside the walled enclosure," interposed *Du Lhut*, who did not want his dwelling surrounded by a curious crowd.

The children had no sooner gone outside, than their shrieks of laughter drew Antoine to the window. The dwarf, his head sunk between his shoulders, his thin legs folded under him, was crouching on the ground, while the two boys took turns jumping over him.

"Looks for all the world like a toad. What a hideous creature he is," muttered Antoine.

"You don't admire the new member of my family?" asked *Sieur de Casson*, laughing heartily.

Antoine shook his head. "If he belonged to me, I'd chain him up where I wouldn't be compelled to look at him."



"The Oki of the False Faces!"

"Where will you lodge him?" asked Du Lhut. "You won't want him under your feet all the time, surely."

"There is Louis Dupont's cabin," said Antoine. "After his wife's death he returned to France, and his son-in-law tells me that he expects to remain there."

"It will be just the place," said De Casson. "I'll put him there, for I should hate to think that such a queer creature as this dwarf might be prowling about the house at all hours of the night." He turned to Antoine: "My sister writes me that he is not to be trusted, so it will be well for you to be on your guard. Just now, however, you must look after the supplies we are to carry back with us. Here is the list of articles needed for use on the seigniority. While we are about our affairs you go to Lower Town, to the merchant Godfrey, and see that everything is in readiness to start back tomorrow."

As the door closed on Antoine, Sieur de Casson turned to Du Lhut. "Come and spend the winter with me, Du Lhut, and bring the little Onondaga with you."

"I'll be glad to do so. I'm sure the seigniority will be a better place for Scandawatti than Quebec could ever be. If he were killed here by a revengeful Huron or Algonquin, it would be made an excuse for an attack upon us by the warriors of the Iroquois. As for myself, I need a few months' rest anyway. No matter who is in control, we'll have trouble with the Iroquois. They are determined to wipe out the Indian tribes

who are our allies. We must protect our allies or share their fate."

That evening after the lamps were lighted Achille and Scandawatti sat in front of the open fireplace and watched the flames eat up the big logs. They asked many questions when Du Lhut and De Casson talked of the cunning of the chiefs of the Iroquois and of the bravery of the Frenchmen who led the fighting men of Canada.

When the conversation of Du Lhut and De Casson turned to the fur trade, the two boys began to dream, their eyes bent on the leaping flames; for deep in their hearts the boys did have dreams. Little White Savage saw himself clothed in buckskin, leading the fighting men of Canada to the very walls of the Iroquois stronghold, laying waste their villages with fire and sword. Little Red Savage saw himself with plumed head and body streaked with paint, shaking high his bloody tomahawk, carrying death and destruction to the French, the enemies of his people.





CHAPTER XIII

A FALSE ALARM

TO Little Red Savage the seigniory of Sieur de Casson was a fairyland; even in the manor house were many wonderful things. When he first looked at himself in the long mirrors, he could scarcely believe he saw merely a reflection. Only by going up and touching the image in the mirror could he make sure that it was not really himself. Then, too, the tapestries on the walls were a source of delight to him. The finely dressed men and women were woven with such skill that they seemed about to step out into the room. The glass pendants on the chandeliers dazzled his eyes with their flashing lights, and when he sat down to the table, with its flowered china and glistening silver, he could scarcely eat because of his interest in the gorgeous surroundings.

But to Little Red Savage the most wonderful thing he had ever seen was the clock. He listened wonderingly to its "tick-tock, tick-tock." He had heard crickets sing in the night, but they sometimes stopped to rest; the clock, though, never stopped. It cried

"tickety-tickety-tickety" day and night. One day he took the clock in his hands. He examined it carefully, top and bottom, front and back. "Stop!" he shouted, shaking it vigorously.

"Tick-tock, tick-tock," it answered.

He placed it on the table. "I'll scare it into silence!" he cried.

He jumped in front of it and shrieked the blood-curdling war whoop of the Iroquois, but its tiresome "tick-tock" continued.

"Make it stop!" cried Scandawatti, turning to Achille, who stood beside him shaking with laughter.

"It's wound up to go all day," said Achille.

"It has a spirit inside it," declared Scandawatti.

Though everything was so wonderful and strange to Little Red Savage, who had lived all his life in an Indian village, he bore himself with dignity. He was heir to a chieftainship, and when he grew to manhood he would belong to the council of sachems, men of the highest standing among the Iroquois.

Although Little Red Savage learned from Little White Savage the customs of the French, the Indian boy took his turn as instructor when the two were in the forest. Though young, he had the cunning of his people. He could read the compass signs of nature. He could distinguish the sounds of the forest, and he could interpret the voices of the woods as well as the most skillful of the *coureurs de bois*.

One day the two boys went out with Antoine, who wanted to set snares for wild turkeys. They stopped close to a swamp, where the big trapper suspected the turkey hens of hiding their nests.

Antoine dropped on his knees to look into a thicket, when suddenly, with a "Quirr-t! Quirr-t!" a wild turkey scurried from her nest and out of sight in an instant.

"Well, she's gone," said Antoine in disgust. "And all because I was stupid."

A few minutes later Little Red Savage appeared carrying a big turkey.

"Where did you get that?" asked Antoine. "Is that the turkey I frightened away?"

"Yes, but she didn't go far. I heard her coming, so I set a snare for her at an opening of the thicket."

"She is good and fat, and we shall have a feast. Sieur de Casson has been wanting a turkey for a week past."

"I wish I could catch a turkey," said Achille. "Though I steal upon them ever so carefully, they always get away from me."

"It takes a redskin to catch turkeys," said Antoine. "Of all the wildfowl, they are hardest to catch. Many times I have gone out hunting turkeys and have come back empty handed. But it seems to me that the redskins can hear the first wing-stroke of a wildfowl."

"The best way to catch turkeys is to find out their roosting places, and then go there at night," said Scan-

dawatti. "That's the way we do when we go pigeon hunting. In that way we catch hundreds of the young pigeons."

"Most of the wildfowl have their breeding places in the swamps, so they are hard to get. We ought, though, to find some rabbits in the traps this morning, for there are a great many running about in the woods. I'll hang this turkey to the limb of a tree, and then prowling foxes and weasels can't get it. Come, we must hurry, so as to get back before dark."

Antoine had fixed a couple of nooses in a clump of birch saplings, and in them he now found two rabbits. These, too, he hung out of the reach of prowling animals, and then hurried forward to see what might have been caught in his other snares.

The two boys followed after, looking about on all sides with bright, inquiring eyes. Their feet shuffled through the fallen leaves that littered the forest. The song birds had deserted the woods, for the biting winds had come, but the trees were still beautiful in their autumn foliage.

"What turns the green leaves red?" asked Achille, holding up a blood-red leaf for Scandawatti to look at.

"That is a message from the Great Manitou," Little Red Savage said gravely.

"What does the message say?" asked Little White Savage, looking for written characters first on one side of the leaf and then on the other.

"He warns the forest people that the Winter-Maker is on the way."

Just then a nut fell on Achille's head. He looked up to see a squirrel frisking about in the branches above.

"Does the Great Manitou tell the squirrels to gather a store of nuts for the winter?" he asked.

"Yes, and he warns the birds to fly south until the snow and ice are gone."

"We must lay in a store of food, too," said Antoine, "for the old men say we are to have a hard winter. When it gets a little colder we will freeze all the game we bring in, so that when heavy snowstorms come we'll have a supply on hand."

"I like to eat the flat tails of the beaver when they are roasted," said Achille. "Why don't you go beaver hunting before the snows come?"

"March is the season for beaver trapping. Then the skins of the beaver are in fine condition. But if we have trouble with the Iroquois this winter, we'll have to spend our time fighting instead of hunting."

"But if the rivers are filled with ice and the forest with snow, the Iroquois can't get here," said Little White Savage.

Little Red Savage laughed. "Neither frozen rivers nor snowdrifts will keep back the warriors of the Iroquois."

"But why do the Iroquois kill the Illinois Indians?" asked Achille. "The Illinois do them no harm."

"The Illinois steal the beavers from our hunting grounds. The French kill people if they steal from them, but they think that if other tribes steal from us they should not be punished."

"The Illinois claim that all the beavers they take are from their own hunting grounds," said Antoine.

"The Chief of Men who dwells in the sky gave that land to my people," declared Scandawatti.

"It is only an excuse to kill off the Illinois," muttered Antoine, too polite openly to say so much to Little Red Savage. "Well, anyway," he said aloud, "the Illinois should be protected by the French, for they are our allies."

"The Iroquois are not afraid of the French and their allies," said Scandawatti.

"No, the Iroquois are not afraid of anyone, more's the pity," Antoine muttered under his breath.

While Antoine and the two boys were thus going along through the forest, Black Hawk, a Huron scout, suddenly stepped out on the trail and hurried forward. "It isn't safe in the woods when the warriors of the Iroquois are hiding in the thickets," he said.

"Do you mean to say that those redskins are prowling around here?" demanded Antoine.

"Yes. I caught a glimpse of a plumed warrior, and followed him. He is of the Iroquois. He may be a scout sent out by the main party. I came back to warn the French of their danger."

"Well, come with me. *Sieur de Casson* should be told of this. If they attack us we'll need all the fighting men we can get."

Antoine led his little party back the way they had come, so as to get the turkey and rabbits he had left hanging on the trees. They reached home without catching sight of any *redskins*, but so soon as *Antoine* took *Black Hawk* to *Sieur de Casson*, to whom the *Huron* told his story, there was a great bustle of preparation for an attack. At once men were sent up and down the river to warn the settlers, and in a few hours everything was in readiness to repel the savages. From that time on a close watch was kept on the forest and river.

Just about dusk a canoe was seen approaching.

"It is *Sieur Du Lhut*," said *Antoine*.

Black Hawk looked keenly at the other occupant of the boat, and then said. "There is a young *Iroquois* with him. It is the young brave whom I saw in the forest this morning."

As soon as *Du Lhut* and his companion entered the stockade, *Scandawatti* ran to meet the young brave. "It is my cousin, *Leaping Deer*," he cried.

He was greeted affectionately by the young *redskin*, who explained to *Sieur de Casson* that he had been sent by *Chief Illiol* to inquire after the health and well-being of the little *Onondaga*.

Leaping Deer was a fine-looking Indian, who bore

himself with dignity. He was treated with great respect by Sieur de Casson, and received as much attention as if he had been a Frenchman of note.

Achille and Scandawatti greatly enjoyed the few days he remained at the seigniory. The boys were given more freedom when Leaping Deer assured Sieur de Casson that the Mohawks had no war parties out.

"But the Clan of the Bear is hostile to the French," said Du Lhut.

"Yes, but the Mohawks have angered the Oki of the False Faces and they fear its power. The Mohawks will stay away from the country of the French until they have appeased its anger."

"How do they expect to do that?"

"Some of the medicine men among the Mohawks have great power. They are now making charms and weaving spells that will keep away evil spirits."

After a few days spent in hunting with the French woodrangers, Leaping Deer, loaded with presents for himself and the Chiefs of the Onondagas, departed for the land of the Iroquois.





CHAPTER XIV

THE DWARF CLAIMS TO POSSESS MAGICAL POWER

AT first the dwarf had no duties to perform, but when old Jean found him rummaging among his master's papers he was put to work. "It will give him less time to meddle with what does not concern him," *Sieur de Casson* said to *Antoine*, under whose orders the dwarf was placed.

The dwarf found the work assigned to him to be pleasant enough. Among other duties, he had to set the eel pots for the daily catch. In the morning and evening he had to go fishing for some hours, so that his master might have fresh fish for the table. Sometimes he brought home fine salmon, which were plentiful at certain seasons of the year. Again, he used his jacket as a bag in which to carry home the eggs of waterfowl. At times he returned from fishing and brought a turtle hanging over his shoulder. Although he was never the chosen companion of any of the wood-rangers, they didn't dislike him at first. He could play the violin and he could sing the gay songs then popular in Paris. For hours he would sit with his thin legs

folded under him, scraping his fiddle for the young people to dance.

When at times he came pounding on the gate of the stockade long after most people were in bed, he muttered the excuse that he had fallen asleep under a bush. Later, however, to Achille and Scandawatti, he related his pretended adventures with the frightful devils of the forest. The boys never doubted his word, for everyone in those days believed that there were demons in the woods.

One day *Sieur de Casson*—who had fallen asleep on a couch screened by curtains from the rest of the room—was aroused by the exclamation of the two boys. They were bending over a glass under which was a fly. When either Achille or Scandawatti took the glass in his hands, it had no magnifying power. So soon as the dwarf's hand touched the crystal, the fly appeared as an immense insect, many times its natural size.

"Why is it?" asked the children in a breath.

"It is magic," said the dwarf solemnly. "In your hands the glass has no power."

Sieur de Casson tiptoed across the room. The glass was in Achille's hand when *Sieur de Casson* grabbed the dwarf's arm. Suddenly, from out the dwarf's sleeve fell another glass. The dwarf snatched at it, but *Sieur de Casson's* hand closed over it first. Then he stepped back, laughing. "That was very neatly

done; but I have known others who were clever with their hands, too." He looked keenly at the dwarf, whose expression was positively vicious. Instantly, with a wolfish howl, the dwarf ran out of the room.

The two boys stared at each other in amazement, as they heard him go clattering down the stairs. Running to the window they saw him dart out of the gate and disappear into the forest.

"What ails him?" asked Achille.

"He is angry at having his trick exposed. I'll now show you how he was fooling you. Take his glass, Achille. You see how it magnifies? It has the same power in your hands that it had in the dwarf's. Now Scandawatti, take the glass in your hands and look at this butterfly."

Little Red Savage exclaimed at the wonders which the glass revealed to him. "Isn't there really any magic in it?" he asked.

"No, this wonderful power was given to the glass by the workman that ground it. The dwarf had two glasses, framed exactly alike, only one of which has magnifying power. He is quick in the use of his hands, so he slipped the magnifying glass up his sleeve, and handed you this other glass, a lens without power."

For some days after this occurrence, the dwarf kept away from the manor house. At length Sieur de Casson sent for him. The dwarf came shuffling in, and stood sullen and defiant before his master.

"I sent for you to give you back your glasses."

"I thought you had destroyed them," said the dwarf, with a look of relief.

"I have not yet destroyed them, but I shall, if I find that you are using them as a means of making the children believe you have magical power. You may try that on the woodrangers and the Indians," *Sieur de Casson* said, laughing at the haste with which the dwarf left the room so soon as he had the glasses again in his possession.

The woodrangers were not to be deceived by the dwarf's manipulation of the glasses. The Indians, however, credulous as the children, were easily convinced that the dwarf had power even beyond that of their medicine men.

When *Sieur de Casson* told *Du Lhut* of the dwarf's two glasses, the latter took a serious view of the matter. "The rascal! He'd like to gain control over the mind of your son," *Du Lhut* cried.

"I hadn't thought of it in that way," said *Sieur de Casson* angrily. "If I had, I should have had him severely punished."

"It is just as well that you didn't. He might do the child some harm in order to revenge himself on you."

"Antoine," said *Sieur de Casson*, "tell the dwarf at once that he must not take the children with him into the forest any more. Whenever the dwarf is not

employed, keep the children away from him. I wish some prowling redskin would carry him off."

"If he weren't so ugly, you might sell him," suggested Du Lhut. "I can't understand how your sister ever came to buy him."

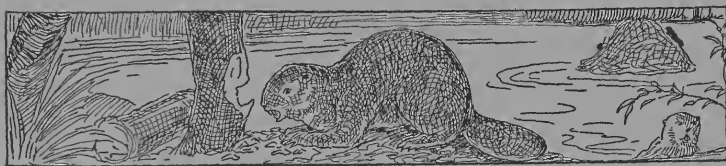
"I think it very likely she came into possession of him just as I did; somebody doubtless wanted to get rid of him, and so gave him to her."

It was true that the dwarf had been presented to the Countess de Fiesque, but it was not that he might be gotten rid of. A cousin of De Fiesque claimed to be the rightful heir to an estate held by the count. If he could get possession of certain papers and destroy them, there would be a chance to establish his claim, for he had powerful friends at court. He made offers of friendship, pretending that he was now convinced of the count's rights. As a proof of his friendship he presented the dwarf to the countess.

The dwarf was really a spy. Some of his actions were at last reported to the countess, and she then set an old servant to watch him. Convinced that he was a tool of their enemy, the count had the dwarf accompany him aboard a vessel bound for Canada.

It was all cleverly done. The dwarf had no idea that he had taken his last look at Old France. When he went below to eat his dinner, the wine he drank was so heavily drugged that he slept like a log while the ship was sailing out of the harbor. When he awoke,

he was told that the Countess de Fiesque was sending him as a present to her brother, and that he would find a letter from her in his pocket. At first he raved like a madman. Then, drawing a knife, he threatened to kill the captain if he wasn't put back to land. After he had been confined in a dark dungeon for some days, however, he decided it would be wise to make the best of a bad situation. Thus he reached New France and came into the possession of the *Sieur de Casson*.





CHAPTER XV

THE DWARF HAS AN ADVENTURE WITH SEVEN DEVILS

FATHER LAMBERVILLE, who attended to the spiritual needs of the villagers, also instructed Achille and Scandawatti in the truths of religion. He wanted to keep the boys safe in the fold of the Church, and when he made his pastoral visits he frequently took them with him.

"You may go with me down the river," he said to them one day, as he was making ready to visit some of the settlers a few miles below. "Put on your buckskin suits. You are almost naked." He looked reproachfully at Achille. "You should set a good example to the other children of the signiory."

The priest used a birch-bark canoe when he made his trips up and down the river, because the houses of the settlers were scattered along the river front for many miles. A half hour's vigorous paddling brought them to the cabin of Jacques Aliot, who lived close to the water. They found him away, but his wife hastened to make them welcome. She felt honored by the visit of the priest and the son of Sieur de Casson.

Around the house, from the direction of the river, darted three sturdy youngsters, all destitute of even a shred of clothing. The good priest was indignant. "François, it is indecent to run about naked in the woods," he said to the eldest of the three.

"It cannot be helped, Father," protested their mother, with a look of pride at her fine offspring. "It is all we can do to scrape together enough to pay our dues to our good overlord, *Sieur de Casson*, and to provide warm clothing for the winter, when the deep snows and the biting winds send us shivering to the fire. In summer the boys need no clothing in the woods. There they are seen only by the birds and the wild beasts, and by an occasional Indian, or by you, when you come. If they had known you were here, they would have clothed themselves in your honor."

"It is true," the priest said kindly, "that many mouths to feed will use up one's substance and leave but little to spend for clothing." He turned to the boys: "But go now and put on your shirts, and then come and recite your catechism."

As soon as their religious duties were performed, the children began playing hide and seek around the house, while the priest took the footpath through the woods to visit others of his flock.

"Come, François," called the mother, "you must set the eel pots. And while you are at the river, see if you cannot catch some fish for our dinner."

François picked up his eel pots, and hook and line, and with the other children close at his heels made his way to his favorite fishing pool.

As soon as Achille and Scandawatti were screened by the bushes on the river bank, they began jerking off their clothes as though oppressed by the weight of them. Even the Aliot boys, who wore only thin cotton shirts, seemed relieved when they saw their garments hanging on a bush.

While François was carefully setting his eel pots, the other children began wrestling. Soon there was a shriek and a splash and the wrestlers tumbled into the shallows. They crawled out from among the reeds and cat-tails, and hearing a chuckle, looked up to see the black dwarf standing on the bank. He danced and clapped his hands, when, dripping with mud and water, the children clambered up beside him. They dropped down to rest, and the dwarf squatted beside them.

"Tell me," said Achille, when he had recovered his breath, "what made you come pounding on the gate so late last night. I was in bed and asleep. There was such a racket that it awakened me."

"Sh-sh-sh-sh," cautioned the dwarf, rolling his eyes and looking behind him at the dark rim of the forest. The boys looked behind them, too, and their breath came a little faster. They wondered what danger threatened them.

"I will tell you," said the dwarf, "but you must say nothing about it. There are evil spirits in the air that come so close sometimes that they can hear our lightest whispers." Then he rolled his head about, and looked above and around him, as though trying to glimpse the spirits of which he spoke. "Some men laugh at such things," he said, "but it is only the very young who do so, only those who have not seen devils in some form or other. It was this way: I had fallen asleep under a bush, and had slept so soundly that I heard nothing. Suddenly there was a great hubbub that seemed to come from deep within the earth. There was no one in sight, but from behind a thicket close by, came a groan—then shrieks—and out jumped seven devils. The leader was frightful to behold. His feet were shod like a horse's hoofs, and he clapped them together as a man would clap his hands. I took to my heels, and the devils came running after me, whooping and yelling. 'Hoo-woo-oo!' they yelled. It made my blood run cold just to hear them. When I looked back, flames were coming out of their ears, and at every jump sparks flew from their feet. Just as I reached the gate I thought of the silver cross I always wear at my neck, so I shook it in the very face of the biggest devil. With a fearful yell he sank into the earth, and the rest with him. The smoke and flames that burst out when the earth closed over them almost choked me."

The dwarf got no further, for a fearful groan came from a near-by thicket, and a mournful "Hoo-woo-oo" sent the cold chills chasing up and down his spine. Only the day before the priest had rebuked the dwarf for telling some fanciful tale. "If you do not stop lying," he said to him, "the father of lies will send his fiends to get you." The dwarf wondered if they had come for him now.

He took to his heels, and the children after him. They could see no one, but they could hear footsteps behind them. Then, "Click! Click!" It was the sharp clang of metal striking metal. The children needed no other proof that the same troop of devils which had terrified the dwarf was now after them. Running with all their might they were soon safe in Madame Aliot's cabin. Breathless, they could only stammer out their explanations.

The dwarf seemed as badly frightened as the children. Though his silver cross still hung at his neck, he had not thought to use it.

"But where is François?" asked Madame Aliot.

Where, indeed, was François? They had never thought of him. Achille and Scandawatti looked crest-fallen. They felt that they had acted cowardly.

Madame Aliot glared at the dwarf. "And you, who at least have the head and body of a man, you left that child to be torn to pieces by devils." Then, throwing her apron over her head, she began to cry.



"Father Lamberville frequently took the boys with him."

"What were you in such a hurry about?" It was François's voice. "Here are your clothes. You had better put them on, for Father Lamberville will come back soon." François handed his brothers their shirts, and gave the buckskin suits to Achille and Scandawatti.

Then the four boys began to tell François of their adventure. All talked at once. François laughed.

"That accounts for the fun that Paul Michel and Jean Laut were having. They were trying to run, but every few steps they would stop and laugh uproariously."

"Yes, but we could hear the click of the iron on the devil's feet," his brother assured him.

"Ha! Ha!" and François himself doubled up with laughter. "When I first saw them, they were knocking their traps together. That's what made the clicking sound."

"You may be sure those mischievous woodrangers had something to do with it," said Madame Aliot.

"They must have heard you tell us about the devils chasing you last night," Achille said to the dwarf.

The dwarf looked sullen and angry. He knew he must have cut a ridiculous figure, racing through the woods, fleeing from the devils he believed he had conjured up. It meant numberless jokes at his expense, and when, through the open door, he saw Paul Michel and Jean Laut approaching, he muttered curses. Then he jumped through the open window and hurried away.



CHAPTER XVI

ACHILLE AND SCANDAWATTI ANGER THE DWARF

THE dwarf, though a slave, did not feel his bondage when upon the seigniory of Sieur de Casson. On the contrary, he was given so few duties that he became insolent toward the other servants.

"He orders us around as though he were the master," old Jean complained to Antoine. "When I tell him that he should clean his fish, and not bring them home for me to clean, he begins to dance and sing; and the louder I talk, the louder he sings."

Just then they heard the dwarf whistling outside. "I'll hide here and see what he has to say this morning," said Antoine, slipping quietly behind the door.

"Here is a fine salmon. See that you cook it right," the dwarf commanded, as he slammed the fish down on the table and glowered at Jean.

"It isn't cleaned," objected the old man. "You remember I told you to clean the fish before bringing them here."

"As though I should take orders from a dirty kitchen servant like you," growled the dwarf.

Antoine stepped from his hiding place. "Take your knife and clean that fish," he ordered. "After this, before leaving the river bank, clean all the fish you catch. You've had so much freedom that you've come to think you are free. Remember—a master can whip a slave in New France as well as in Old France."

The dwarf drew his knife and set to work on the fish, scowling threateningly at old Jean meanwhile.

"He looked as though he wanted to plunge that knife into me," muttered Antoine, as he walked away. In a moment he met Du Lhut, and together they entered the manor house.

"I'm going to take all these weapons downstairs and give them a good cleaning," said Antoine. Then he removed several muskets from the wall and carried them downstairs to a porch at the rear of the house.

Now tired of play, Achille and Scandawatti were sitting under a tree not far away. They spied the dwarf, and Achille called to him.

"Come! Sit down and tell us a story. No, don't tell us a story. Let's play one. You remember that story you told us, the one about the witch who turned little boys and girls into animals? We'll each pretend to be one of those animals. I'll be the beaver."

"And I'll be the black bear," said Scandawatti.

"What animal shall I be?" asked the dwarf, who was sitting with his shoulders hunched up and his legs doubled under him.

Little Red Savage looked him over carefully. "You will be the toad," he declared. Then, as he noticed the red beads around the dwarf's neck, he added, "A toad with red spots—and with horns." The expression "with horns" was prompted by the bumps on each side of the dwarf's forehead.

"With bulging eyes," suggested Achille, who did not realize that the dwarf's eyes were rolling so wickedly from rage and not from an effort to act his part well.

The cry which the dwarf gave at that instant was so shrill that it startled Antoine. He put down the musket he was cleaning and stepped out where he could see what was going on. To his astonishment he saw the dwarf snatch a fawnskin bag, which Achille wore at his side, and tear it into shreds. He next jerked off the beaded band that Scandawatti wore around his head, and tore it into bits. The two boys did not know what to make of such actions until the dwarf lay hold of them and began to shake them violently. They were helpless in his grip. They kicked and struggled in vain.

"Antoine! Antoine!" called Achille.

In an instant Antoine had the dwarf in his grasp, and was shaking him as vigorously as he had shaken the two boys. So loud were the dwarf's howls of rage that Sieur de Casson and Du Lhut came hurrying out of the house so soon as they heard the commotion.

"What does this mean?" demanded De Casson.

"It means that this creature thinks he can punish the son of his master, if the child displeases him. He was trying to shake the life out of the children when I caught him."

While this explanation was being made the dwarf was screeching so shrilly that *Sieur de Casson* could scarcely hear *Antoine's* words.

"He is simply giving way to his ungovernable temper. He ought to be whipped," said *Du Lhut*.

"I don't want to have him flogged, but he must be punished. Here, men!" *De Casson* called to some woodrangers who were approaching. "Help carry this fellow to the river bank, and duck him until his temper cools off."

This order, however, was not an easy one to carry out. It took four of the muscular young woodrangers to master the dwarf, and although they succeeded in keeping hold of him, their progress toward the gate was slow.

However, the performance furnished good sport for the crowd of woodrangers who had been attracted by the dwarf's screams. If the dwarf's arms were left free for an instant, one of the bearers got a blow for his carelessness. As for inducing him to walk, he was determined he would not. When not kicking at the woodrangers, he drew up his legs and hung limp in their arms; then, when they weren't expecting it, he struck at them so wickedly that even the doughty wood-

rangers were compelled to let go their hold in order to defend themselves.

"Hold on to him! Don't let him go!" shouted Jean Laut, one of the jostling crowd of *coureurs de bois*, who, shouting and laughing, followed on the heels of the dwarf and his bearers.

"Come and take my place if you think you can do any better. I've had all I want!" called out one of the woodrangers. But even as he spoke, he turned to avoid another blow from the dwarf. Already the woodranger's nose was bleeding and his lip was cut.

"Here, stop!" cried Jean. "I'll take your place." Jean thought it should be an easy matter for four stout men to manage the dwarf. But the dwarf remembered the grudge he had against Jean, who had teased him about running away from the devils. He knew he was going to be ducked, anyway. Thinking he might as well be revenged on Jean at this time, he aimed all his blows at the woodranger, who ducked his head and dodged first to one side then to the other in order to avoid them.

The men stumbled blindly along with their burden, for it was impossible for them to watch where they were going. When at length they reached the river, they found that in order to duck the dwarf they had to go into the water with him. And not only that, but they had to hold him under the water until he was half drowned, before he would cease screaming and

fighting. Finally, however, when they took him out of the water and laid him on the bank, the fight seemed to have been entirely taken out of him.

Breathing heavily after their exertions, the woodrangers stood over the dwarf. He opened his eyes and looked up at them as if nearly lost to consciousness.

"Come away," whispered Jean Laut. "When he comes to his senses he may break loose again. I'd rather tackle a redskin any day."

The men slowly walked away and presently they warned the other woodrangers to avoid the place where the dwarf lay.

* * * * *

When the woodrangers had dragged the dwarf through the gate of the stockade, Sieur de Casson turned to Antoine. "Now tell me what was done and said, to put that creature in such a rage."

"When first I learned that anything was the matter, I heard him scream and saw him snatch and tear to pieces the fawnskin bag which the little Onondagas gave to Achille. Then he grabbed Scandawatti's head band—you see the pieces there—then he took hold of the children and began to shake them."

"I don't know what could have made him so angry," said Achille. "I said, 'Let us play the story you told us the other day, the one about the witch who changed the children into different animals.' I agreed to be the

beaver. 'And I'll be the black bear,' Scandawatti said. When the dwarf asked what he should be, Scandawatti said, 'The toad.'

Antoine chuckled; *Sieur de Casson* and *Du Lhut* looked amused. "'With red spots,' I said," interposed *Little Red Savage*, "because of the red beads he wears. 'And with horns' — because of the bumps on his forehead."

"'With bulging eyes,' I told him," said *Achille*, "because his eyes stand out like a toad's."

Du Lhut roared. "The fellow knows too well his resemblance to a toad to want to take the part of one."

"But we didn't mean to make him angry," protested *Little White Savage*. "No," said *Little Red Savage*. "We didn't intend to anger him. I told him to take the part of the toad because he looks like one, and I thought it would be very easy for him to act like one."

"Remember, after this you children must have nothing to do with the dwarf. You must not play with him nor listen to his stories," said *Sieur de Casson*.

"But he knows such good stories, and he knows so much about devils," protested *Little White Savage*, regretfully.

"He ought to know all about devils for he's one himself," said Antoine.

"No matter how entertaining he is, you must have nothing to do with him," commanded *Sieur de Casson*. "When insane with rage, he might kill you."

Sieur de Casson detained Achille with a touch on the shoulder. Du Lhut, Scandawatti, and Antoine started towards the house.

"My son, it was unkind to tell the dwarf to take the part of a toad."

"But Scandawatti didn't mean to be unkind," protested Achille. "You know, father, that among the Iroquois, if a man looks like a toad, they call him, 'The Toad.'"

"I know that is the custom among the Iroquois, and that it is not meant as a taunt. But you must realize, my son, that customs differ greatly among the Indians and the French. For example, last evening when we were at the table, I saw Scandawatti use his fingers to take a piece of meat off his plate and put it into your mouth."

"Yes, father, it was a good piece of meat, and Scandawatti wanted me to have it."

"It was generous of him," said Sieur de Casson, with a grim smile, "and I know that he was acting according to the law of Indian hospitality. But among the French such actions are considered very rude and impolite. As for the dwarf—leave him utterly alone. He is not a fit companion for children."

After his outburst of temper the dwarf stayed away from the two boys. His sulky mood lasted several weeks, and during that time he spent most of each day and a large part of every night in the forest. The

coureurs de bois had little to say to him, for *Sieur de Casson* had requested them to leave him to himself. When he brought in fish or game, he took it to the manor house, gave it to *Jean* with a surly word or two, and again went to the woods.

Little Red Savage was amazed that the dwarf should have received such light punishment. "If a slave among the Iroquois should in anger touch any one, he would suffer death," he said to *Antoine*.

"Yes, that would be his fate among the Iroquois, no doubt, but *Sieur de Casson* thinks this poor creature is to be pitied."

"If he were my slave, I would split his head open with my hatchet. A slave among the Iroquois fears his master."

"And they have reason to do so. When I was last among the Mohawks, a young warrior killed a Huron slave because he spilled a few drops of water."

"He was a Huron dog. He ought to have died," said Little Red Savage, haughtily.

"Well, I should think the poor creature would rather die than lead the life some of them have to lead."

"Before very long all the other tribes will be slaves to the Iroquois."

"Not if the French have anything to say about it," muttered *Antoine*, as he turned to speak to a friend who was passing.



CHAPTER XVII

DU LHUT GOES TO THE COUNTRY OF THE OTTAWAS

THE woodrangers were fond of music and dancing, so there were no long, lonesome evenings for Little Red Savage. The Iroquois, too, were fond of dancing, and they loved music; but their dancing and music were altogether different from that of the Frenchmen. Indeed, Little Red Savage thought the dancing of the Iroquois was much more dignified and becoming to great warriors than the dancing of the French. But sometimes, when it grew late, the little Indian boy began to doze, and to dream; the swaying forms of the Frenchmen became the leaping warriors of the Iroquois, and again he heard the music of his people and listened to the shouts of the young braves as they joined in the dance.

Achille taught Scandawatti to play on the flute, and he, in turn, learned from Little Red Savage how to sing the songs of the Iroquois to the accompaniment of a tortoise-shell rattle.

The two little friends chattered in a language which was a queer mixture of French and Iroquois. Both

could speak the Huron language, too, for the scouts of the French belonged to the Huron tribe, and among the Iroquois there were many Huron prisoners and slaves. Then, Black Hawk, the Huron scout who always accompanied Du Lhut on his trapping expeditions, often took Achille and Scandawatti with him when he went out to set his traps.

The two boys felt at home in the woods, and thought it a hardship to be shut up in the stockade. When they went out with the woodrangers the boys never took food with them; they got what they needed to eat from the forest and the river. They could always choose what they wanted. If they wanted meat, the woods provided plenty of partridges, grouse, and quail; if they went deep into the forest, they sometimes came upon a herd of deer, and then the two boys, with the help of the woodranger, proudly carried home enough meat for the entire village. Sometimes, too, a black bear, who had fattened himself for his winter's sleep, was killed and carried home by the hunters.

With fish in the river, and game in the forest, no one need go hungry, so long as the hunters could go abroad in safety. But often the fierce Iroquois hid in the tangled undergrowth of the forest, or crouched among the reeds and cat-tails that bordered the streams; then, when the hunters went out for fish or game, they had to have armed guards to protect them from those savages.

For the first few months after Scandawatti arrived at the home of *Sieur de Casson*, the Iroquois left the French settlers in peace. Then reports of the murders of lone trappers began to come in, and accounts of the murder of settlers who lived outside the palisaded villages from time to time came to the ears of those on the seigniory.

When the deep snows came, a Huron scout brought word that a party of Iroquois had entrenched themselves on the Ottawa River, so as to seize Huron and Ottawa Indians who came to trade with the French. The young Huron who told the story was taken to the manor house that he might talk to *Sieur de Casson*.

"Give him something to eat first," directed *Sieur de Casson*. "He looks starved and exhausted."

Indeed, the Huron ate as though famished. When he had satisfied his hunger he seated himself on the floor before the open fireplace.

"The Iroquois wolves are lying in wait for my people," began the Huron. "Already they have captured two of our best hunters."

"Are those Hurons still in the hands of your enemies?" asked *Du Lhut*.

"No, the Iroquois roasted them and ate them."

"What a race of terrible savages they are," exclaimed *De Casson*. "*Du Lhut*, will you go up there to drive them off?"

"Yes," answered *Du Lhut*. "The Hurons and

Ottawas must be protected. Our allies will have no respect for us if we do nothing to help them. I shall take a party of *coureurs de bois* big enough to insure an easy victory and to discourage further attacks."

Du Lhut had no difficulty in gathering a sufficient force to take with him. The *coureurs de bois* of Canada were brave, daring, and energetic. They could be relied upon in any emergency. They were men of tried courage, and as cunning as the *redskins* themselves. It was a brave company of hardy woodrangers that filed out of the stockade one morning, and took to their boats. They felt confident of victory, for they knew *Sieur Du Lhut* to be a resourceful leader.

Du Lhut, as he was about to leave, said to Antoine, "Take good care of the little *Onondaga*. He is a hostage in our hands, and no harm must come to him."

"Never fear! No harm shall come to him in your absence. *Sieur de Casson* has forbidden the children to go outside the stockade without me."

"Will you take us every time we want to go?" asked Little White Savage, as the boats moved off down the river.

"We don't like to stay inside the stockade," protested *Scandawatti*.

"I'll take you as often as I can. But go now and play with the other children. Those boys over there are trying to get up a game of football."

Little Red Savage was treated by the other children

of the seigniority with as much respect as they showed to Little White Savage, for the chiefs of the Iroquois were as proud and haughty as the French noblemen. Besides, they were very sensitive to insult.

Now that the heavy snows had come, the children couldn't spend much time in the woods, so they spent many hours making arrows and arrowheads. The Iroquois hated laziness, and they did not permit their children to be idle; so Scandawatti, like the other boys of his nation, was taught to work with his hands—to make moccasins, bows and arrows, and sharp-pointed arrowheads. He also made twine from the bark of trees, and from this he fashioned snares for catching the small birds that were used as food. To catch the larger wildfowl, snares woven of twine made from deerskin were used. Scandawatti was very skillful at this work, and also at sewing with the bone needles used by nearly all Indian tribes.

"No chief among the Iroquois could do better than that," declared Antoine, when Scandawatti presented him with a pair of moccasins he had made. "You, too, must learn to make moccasins," the Frenchman said to Achille, "for they are the only kind of shoes one can wear when trailing through the woods. Sometimes, when I go to trap beavers, I wear out a dozen pairs. If you can make moccasins, you will never be without covering for your feet, for deerskin is always to be had."

"I am learning to make them," said Achille, "but Scandawatti says my stitches are too long and too crooked. And then, I draw my thread too tight and it gets in a pucker."

"That's always the way at first," said Little Red Savage. "I made many pairs of moccasins before my aunt allowed me to cut a pair from the best of the skins."

"I'm afraid your aunt wouldn't let me cut a pair from the best of the skins," said Antoine, as he laughingly held up one foot so that Scandawatti might see the unfinished appearance of his moccasins. "I have so many traps to attend to that I can't spend much time on my moccasins."

"The squaws among my people make many pairs of moccasins before the opening of the hunting season, so that the hunters can always have new ones when they need them. And when they go off on a long trip, they take several pairs with them."

"Yes," answered Antoine, "and when I was among the Hurons I got all the moccasins I needed from the Huron squaws. They were always willing to take beads or cloth in exchange. But the Hurons are afraid to come to Montreal now, for they know the Iroquois are on the warpath."

"Take us to the river to fish this morning," said Achille, coaxingly.

"If I did take you, you couldn't fish. I have no

hooks, except those that came from France, and I can't let you have those."

"Then we can never go fishing," wailed Achille, "for we can never have any hooks."

"Yes, we can," said Scandawatti. "We can make hooks out of this," and he picked up the hind leg of a deer from which the hide and flesh had been stripped.

"Yes, this is the very thing," said Antoine. He cut off a sliver with his knife, and handed it to Scandawatti, who began hunting for a stone with which to smooth it.

"Over there, in that pile," said Antoine, "you'll find stones that are good for polishing." He then split off a piece of bone and handed it to Achille.

"Here," said the kindhearted Frenchman, "is some bone that will make a good hook. Get a stone and smooth it to a point. You'll then have the kind of hook that all Indian tribes use when they are unable to obtain iron hooks from the white hunters and trappers. Tomorrow, if the ice on the river isn't too thick, we'll go fishing. And next week we'll go hunting, if the Iroquois leave us in peace."

And that is the way Achille and Scandawatti spent their time while Du Lhut was journeying to the land of the Ottawas.





CHAPTER XVIII

THE EARTH GIVES UP THE DWARF'S SECRET

DU LHUT had succeeded in avoiding the ambush set for him by the Iroquois, whose scouts had warned them of his coming. After a sharp battle he drove them off. He fortified his camp, and made it serve as a refuge for all the Indian hunters who feared the Iroquois. He had brought cloth, beads, and ammunition for barter, and these he now exchanged for furs brought in by the redskins.

Toward spring disquieting rumors began to come in. Those reported the efforts of the Iroquois to turn the northwestern tribes against the French. The five tribes of the Iroquois nation were allies of the English, while the Indian nations of the Northwest were the allies of the French. It was, therefore, the English of New York against the French of Canada. Both wanted to gain the mastery of the West. To this end the French made bloody raids on the English settlements, and English governors, in turn, furnished the Iroquois with guns and ammunition, thus encouraging them to attack the French settlers.

The Iroquois believed that they could master the French if they could deprive them of their Indian allies. With this aim in view they were now at work among the Hurons, urging them to make a treaty of peace. They wanted the Hurons to be neutral while they themselves were fighting the French.

The governor of Canada was urged to take instant action to prevent a treaty being made between the Iroquois and the Hurons. Knowing of *Sieur Du Lhut's* success in dealing with the Indians, the governor sent for him to come to Quebec in order to talk over affairs.

Du Lhut abandoned his camp on the Ottawa River and brought his men back with him to Montreal, where he disbanded them. On his way to Quebec to confer with the governor, he stopped for a few hours at the seigniory of *Sieur de Casson*.

"I am glad to see you back," was De Casson's greeting. "I heard that the governor had sent for you. It is time that something were being done. Every day the Iroquois grow more arrogant and more insolent in their demands."

"Yes, things are in a bad way. We must keep the tribes of the Northwest as allies, but in order to do so we must show that we can protect them against the Iroquois. The Iroquois now have some of their shrewdest chiefs working among the Hurons. But 'The Rat,' who is the greatest chief among the Hurons, is doubtful of the good faith of the Iroquois.

He knows those cunning redskins as well as they know themselves."

"Well, if you can get the governor to give you a free hand in dealing with the Hurons, all may be settled to advantage. I want you to make this your headquarters so long as you remain in Canada."

"Thank you. This will be a convenient point if I have to get together a company to go to the Huron country. I shall return within a day or two, and let you know the result of my conference with the governor."

It was with a sense of relief that the governor of Canada heard of Du Lhut's arrival. After greeting him cordially, he plied him with questions about his trip up the Ottawa River and said: "You will, I am sure, see the necessity of going to the Huron country. I think you will agree with me that an expedition must be sent to Michilimackinac."

"Yes, an expedition must be sent there. But if I undertake to carry this through, I must have a free hand as to men and supplies, as well as in the matter of presents for the Huron chiefs."

"That, of course, is understood. You know these redskins as well as I do, and you will be the best judge of such matters. I suppose it will take some time to make the necessary arrangements. I'll give you orders on the merchants for all you need, and from time to time I'll be glad to hear of your progress in this affair."

"I'll let you know how things are coming on," said Du Lhut. "I'll go now and hunt up some of the coureurs de bois who have but lately returned from Michilimackinac. After seeing them I shall know what is best to be done."

At Michilimackinac, which was in the Huron country, the French had built a fort and the Jesuits had established a mission for work among the Hurons of that region. The Jesuits—brave men, who suffered untold hardships in their efforts to instruct the redskins in the Catholic faith—always used their influence to further the interests of the French.

On talking to the coureurs de bois who had but recently returned from Michilimackinac, Du Lhut was convinced that only a few of the Hurons had been won over to a treaty of peace with the Iroquois. He knew, too, that the Jesuits, and the Frenchmen in command of Fort Michilimackinac, were doing everything in their power to defeat the plans of these cunning redskins.

It was a long, hard trip to the country of the Hurons so Du Lhut at once began to prepare for the expedition. At his summons coureurs de bois from Quebec, Three Rivers, and Montreal came to the seigniory of Sieur de Casson. Du Lhut was a popular leader, for he was both daring and cautious. The Iroquois, though enemies of the French, had great respect for him. The coureurs de bois were always willing to

follow him, and he soon had the promise of as many men as he wanted.

One day Du Lhut was amazed to have the dwarf stop him and ask permission to go with him to Michilimackinac. "The Hurons who come here think I am a great magician," he said, with a cunning leer.

"Yes, but the woodrangers say you are possessed by a spiteful devil," Du Lhut answered sternly.

Scowling angrily, the dwarf turned away muttering.

Now that an expedition to Michilimackinac had been decided upon, there was constant coming and going of *coureurs de bois* from all the settlements along the river. Even Henri Bair, who had officered a troop of regulars sent over by King Louis, and who had often accompanied Du Lhut on his roving expeditions, now hastened to offer his services to his old leader.

One day Bair came to the seigniory with a party of *coureurs de bois*, and brought his little daughter Adele with him. As she was a great favorite with the children of the seigniory, she was greeted with shouts of welcome so soon as she entered the stockade.

Leaving her with her little playmates, Bair started off in search of Du Lhut. No sooner had the father left the child than the dwarf made his appearance. He shouted to attract her attention, then puckered his thick lips and rolled his eyes, making the men laugh at his antics. Adele had never before seen such a creature,

so when he made a pretence of grabbing her she cried out in terror. This seemed to anger him. He picked up a stick and threatened her with it. At that instant, *Sieur de Casson*, who had approached unseen, gave the dwarf a stinging blow with his cane.

"I wasn't doing anything," whined the dwarf. Then, fearful of more punishment, he dropped on his hands and hopped from one side to the other in order to get out of the way. He looked so comical that his movements brought roars of laughter from the woodrangers. They, too, hopped about and mimicked his sidling gait, until they were stopped by a sharp reproof from *Sieur de Casson*.

Enraged at the ridicule of the woodrangers, the dwarf hastened away into the woods and hid among the big trees. Even there the men's taunting laughter reached him. Shrieking with rage, he pounded and kicked the big tree behind which he was hiding, as though it were a human being.

Antoine, who had taken *Adele* into his arms, was now soothing her. "Never mind," he said. "He has gone off into the woods to sulk. We'll be rid of him for a day or two, anyway." But the child continued to sob, until *Achille* and *Scandawatti* carried her away to play with the other children.

Adele soon forgot the dwarf and the fright he had given her. The dwarf, however, could not forget the humiliation of being beaten in the presence of the

woodrangers. Even after weeks had passed he would mutter curses at the sight of the little girl.

One day when Adele came on a visit to the seigniory, the dwarf saw her as she was entering the stockade. He was at the edge of the wood, close to a big oak. At once he began to stab at the tree, and cry, "I'll get even with you yet, my little beauty!"

"You black rascal! You dare lay hands on that innocent child," cried Antoine, stepping from behind the tree against which the dwarf was crouching. The dwarf dived into the thicket, and soon his shrill, cackling laughter told Antoine that he was at a safe distance.

It was noticed that the dwarf always directed his steps toward a certain tree in the forest whenever things went wrong on the seigniory. This tree was an oak, with great spreading branches. Here he danced and flung his arms about, at one minute, cursing, at the next, shouting with glee.

"Sounds as though he thought he had won a victory over someone," muttered Antoine, as he one day came upon the strange creature during such a wild dance. "What does it all mean?" he asked, stepping out and facing the dwarf, who considered himself alone in the woods.

The dwarf slipped around the tree, and was out of sight before Antoine could catch him.

"I believe you're part snake and part demon,"



"And that is the way Achille and Scandawatti spent their time."

shouted Antoine, angry at being outwitted. "I wonder if he has hidden here something that he has stolen from the seigniory," the old trapper muttered to himself.

"Antoine, Antoine!" shouted Paul Michel, who appeared, running from the direction of the river.

"Here I am! What's the trouble?"

"Two men were attacked by Oneidas this morning. They want you to dress their wounds."

This news put the dwarf and his strange actions out of Antoine's mind for the time being.

"How many of the red fiends were in the attacking party?" Antoine asked.

"There were six of them. Our men killed one and wounded two others. The Oneidas then withdrew and took their wounded with them."

"That's the way it always is! No safety in fishing or hunting. Always the dread of those murderous redskins," growled Antoine.

A few evenings later *Sieur de Casson* sent for Antoine that they might talk over affairs of the seigniory.

"I hear that some of the men are complaining of bad luck in trapping," *De Casson* began, when they had seated themselves in front of the big fireplace.

"Have you noticed," asked Antoine, "that only the woodrangers who ducked the dwarf in the river are complaining of their luck?"

"Surely you are not so foolish as to believe in that nonsense about the dwarf's magical powers?"

"No, I think it isn't magic. It's meanness. Jean Laut's traps have been robbed several times, and he found footprints around them that he swears could have been made by none other than the dwarf."

"What's Jean going to do about it?"

"He's going to set a watch and try to catch the scamp."

"I wish someone would take him off my hands."

"You mean the dwarf?" asked Du Lhut, who had just entered.

"Yes, we've just been talking about him."

"I thought the dwarf seemed mightily interested," said Du Lhut, laughing heartily.

"What do you mean?"

"He was crouching beside the door, listening."

"Mon Dieu! Now he'll know better than to go near the traps. I was telling *Sieur de Casson* that they're going to try to catch him robbing the traps," explained Antoine.

"I've had a feeling of uneasiness ever since the arrival of the dwarf," said *Sieur de Casson*. "He's so full of malice and spite, and withal so cunning, that I often wonder if he brought serious trouble to my sister. What does he do in the forest? He doesn't hunt, surely—he seems to have no desire for that."

"That brings to mind the last time I saw him in the woods. He was dancing and chuckling as though he had gotten the best of someone," answered Antoine.

"In what part of the forest was he?"

"You remember the big oak tree with a cleared space around it? It was there. He was dancing round and round it—one minute chuckling, the next minute cursing. When I spoke to him he was off like a flash."

"We'll look into that tomorrow. Perhaps he has something hidden there."

That night a terrible storm swept through the forest. In its paths it left uprooted trees and broken branches.

The dwarf was usually an early riser, but the lurid lightning and the roaring thunder so filled him with terror, that while the storm raged he could not get a moment's sleep. When the storm died down he slept so heavily that it was several hours after sun-up when he awoke. His thought, on awaking, was the damage the big oak might have suffered from the storm of the night before. In a few minutes he was hastening through the wood, picking his way over fallen trees and broken branches. From a distance he could see that the tree was down. He gave a cry like that of a suffering animal, and hurried on. The big tree held a secret—a secret that must be kept.

Sieur de Casson and Antoine had reached the big oak but a moment before. The top of the fallen tree blocked the trail. They walked around it and looked into the great hole that had once held the tree's roots. As they stood there they heard a piercing cry. They looked up to see the dwarf running toward them.

Just then Sieur de Casson saw a bag of deerskin hanging to the roots of the tree. On the ground beneath it was a bundle of papers that had evidently been thrown out of the bag when the tree was uprooted by the tempest. He picked up the papers, but had only time to see that they related to the estate of Count de Fiesque. Then the dwarf threw himself on De Casson, shrieking, clutching at the papers, trying to tear them from his grasp.

"They are mine! They are mine!" he cried.

The dwarf's attack was so unexpected, that if Antoine hadn't been near, the despicable creature would have been victorious in the struggle. But Antoine clutched the slave's neck in his powerful hands and choked him until the life seemed to have left his body.

"Ugh! You spider!" exclaimed Antoine, as he flung the limp body from him. "He ought to have a bullet through his heart. In Old France he'd lose his life if he were to lay hands on his master."

"Yes, also by the laws of Canada I could take his life. But this slave has breathed in the freedom of New France. We, who obeyed the law without question when we lived in Old France, willfully break the laws of New France and go unpunished. Let the dwarf go. He will not dare return to the seigniory. I am well rid of him. Let's hurry back. I want to examine these papers to see what the fellow was guarding so carefully."

On reading the documents, Sieur de Casson found them to be papers that established Count de Fiesque's rights to his estate. These papers, brought from France by the dwarf, would, if destroyed, have given the count's enemy a good chance to gain the estate.

"What do you think Count de Fiesque will do when he finds these papers gone?" asked Antoine.

"The count is a very shrewd man. He will give no hint of his loss. The dwarf's departure for Canada would not be known to his former master until it was too late to communicate with him, so the count will have no way of knowing that the dwarf secured the papers. But the recovery of these papers from the dwarf will make it necessary for me to leave on the first vessel that sails for France. François de Montigny will remain here to look after things while I am gone, and, with your assistance, I am sure affairs will go on as usual."

A few days later Sieur de Casson sailed for Old France. It took six months to make the trip, but he felt repaid for the long, tiresome journey when he witnessed the joy of the Count and Countess de Fiesque over the return of the papers that meant so much to them.



CHAPTER XIX

ACHILLE AND SCANDAWATTI JOURNEY TO MICHILIMACKINAC

THE dwarf did not return to the seigniory after his attack on *Sieur de Casson*, and although several weeks had passed no one had seen him.

"He must have gone off with some of the Hurons," Antoine decided.

"It's good riddance," said Du Lhut, when told of the matter, and so saying he dismissed it from his mind.

The time set for Du Lhut's departure for Michilimackinac was now drawing near. De Montigny had come from Quebec, and matters were going along as usual at the home of *Sieur de Casson*.

"With François here to look after things, what is to hinder your going with me?" Du Lhut asked Antoine, as they sat smoking their pipes and talking over the journey to Michilimackinac.

"I promised *Sieur de Casson* that the children should be my special care during his absence. With the Iroquois coming to our very walls to shriek their war-

whoops and to butcher and burn, there is no knowing what may happen. Then, there is the dwarf. No one knows where he is or what he has in his mind."

"I know it is out of the question for you to leave the children, Antoine, but I need you. You are the only one, besides myself, who can speak the Huron language with fluency."

"Could we take the children with us?" asked Antoine doubtfully.

"I hadn't thought of it before. But why not? What do you think, De Montigny?"

"Well, I don't see why they wouldn't be just as safe at Michilimackinac as they are here. There's a good fort there, and as the Iroquois are now working among the Hurons, they'll not be watching the Ottawa River and you can probably make the journey in safety."

"How about the little Onondaga?" asked Antoine. "Wouldn't the Hurons take his life?"

"No. At least they won't try to do so until they know whether the Iroquois are to be their enemies or their friends."

"I think his youth would be his safeguard," said De Montigny.

"Stone walls are the best safeguard against the redskins. If war does break out between the Hurons and the Iroquois, Scandawatti will have to stay inside the fort."

Achille and Scandawatti shrieked and danced with

joy when they learned that they were going to Michilimackinac with Antoine. At once they took great interest in the preparations that were being made for the journey.

Sieur Du Lhut decided to make the journey by boat, for the packs were too heavy to carry so great a distance. Then, too, articles for trade had to be taken, as well as presents for the Huron chiefs who were wavering in their allegiance to the French.

When they were ready to start, there were some twenty or thirty boatloads of men and supplies. The hardy, brave coureurs de bois were well armed and well equipped for their long and dangerous journey.

The little company stopped at Montreal to lay in a supply of ammunition. Before leaving, they all gathered in the little chapel to invoke the aid of Saint Michel and to ask him to bring them safely to their journey's end. They felt comforted, for the saint seemed to smile on them as they knelt before his shrine.

They had to go to Michilimackinac through the waters of the turbulent Ottawa. It was a long hard journey, for the boats had to be taken out of the water and carried long distances on account of the many waterfalls in the river. When the woodrangers heard the roar of a cataract, and felt the swift current clutching at their oars, they poled the boats to shore, picked them up, and carried them over great black boulders and jagged rocks. When they reached quiet water,

they again launched the canoes, and then the vigorous paddling of the woodrangers again sent them forward rapidly.

In enduring hardships the French coureurs de bois were as patient as the redskins. When, at evening, they gathered around the camp fire, they were cheerful and lively in spite of the hard labor that had been their portion during the day. For on a trip of this kind work as well as adventure was to be had.

The two boys had all they could do to carry themselves over the wet and slippery rocks. Sometimes, when the way was too rough, the strong arms of a kindly woodranger gave the children a lift. Achille and Scandawatti were learning the lesson of quiet endurance; they gave no sign of the weariness that often weighed down their limbs, but when night came their eyes closed in dreamless sleep so soon as they had eaten their evening meal.

After several days of travel, the woodrangers stopped to hunt, as they needed a supply of fresh meat. In those vast forests that stretched on all sides of them were deer, moose, and bears, as well as panthers, lynx, and wolves.

Achille and Scandawatti sat up, wide-eyed and alert, when, in the nighttime, they heard the howling of the big timber wolves.

"Are those wolves coming this way?" asked Little Red Savage, as Antoine threw more wood on the fire.

"No, they are going in the other direction. But the fires will be kept up all night, so you may go to sleep without fear of the wolves."

The camp had been arranged both for comfort and security. At the water's edge were the boats, which had been hauled up on the bank for safety; the packs of supplies were piled close by, so that no thieving night prowler could drag them away. The rushing river protected the camp from attack in front, and a half-circle of fires guarded its rear from wild animals or hostile Indians.

But Achille noticed that back in the forest, where the ruddy light from the fire couldn't penetrate, there was dense blackness. What if a panther should spring out of the shadows that now seemed to be filled with dim shapes? What if other wild beasts were crouching there? Would they leap from the tangled thickets, or would they slink close to the ground, skulking in the shadows until close enough to spring? He heard footsteps, then presently two men stepped out into the fire-light. They were Jean Laut and Pierre Bondon.

"Go to sleep," said Pierre, when he saw the anxious look in Achille's eyes. Then he added laughingly, "You needn't keep watch. Jean and I are on guard tonight." He pointed to Scandawatti, who was fast asleep: "The little redskin knows there is no danger."

Achille knew there was no danger with these two

brave men on guard, and soon he was sleeping as soundly as Little Red Savage.

Though Du Lhut thought there was no likelihood of being set upon by the Iroquois, he was determined that those wily redskins should not take him by surprise. Every night he set a guard to keep watch until the camp was astir in the morning.

The company had been traveling a week or more, when, one morning, the dwarf was brought into camp. Two of the woodrangers had found him trying to snare some birds. He had made no attempt to escape; indeed, he had come with his captors willingly. He looked thin and worn.

Du Lhut eyed the dwarf sternly. "Well," he asked, "what have you to say for yourself?"

"I'd like to speak to you alone," said the dwarf in a low tone. "I don't want the Huron scouts to hear what I have to say."

"Antoine," said Du Lhut, "see that no one comes near us while we are talking." Then he motioned to the dwarf to follow him toward the center of the camp.

"You may not believe me," began the dwarf, "but I am sure I could be of some use to you at Michilimackinac. I can speak the Huron tongue, and I have much influence with the Hurons who from time to time come to the seigniory of Sieur de Casson. They think I am a great medicine man, and that I can see into the future. If I tell them that a spirit has told

me the Hurons must not make a treaty of peace with the Iroquois, they will believe me."

"If I take you with me, will you promise to obey me without question?" asked Du Lhut.

"Yes," said the dwarf.

"I'll put a bullet through your head if you turn traitor. I'll not be so lenient as *Sieur de Casson*, who, by the way, has gone to France to restore the papers you stole from the Count de Fiesque."

The dwarf cast his eyes down, and shuffled his feet, but attempted no defense of himself.

"There's another thing," continued Du Lhut. "You must do a share of the work that falls on all of us. You will take your orders from *Antoine*, as of old, and there must be none of the spite work of which my men have complained in the past. If you are hungry, over there are some fish, left from our breakfast."

The dwarf ate as though famished. He had not had a satisfactory meal since he left the home of *Sieur de Casson*. He was not used to the life of the woods, and he had no skill in trapping. As he carried no gun, he had been compelled to depend for his food on such small game as he could snare.

Antoine grumbled at this addition to their party. "How do you know that he isn't being used as a decoy by the Iroquois? And how did he get here, anyway?" were his first questions.

Du Lhut approached the dwarf.

"How did you come this far on your journey?" he asked.

"I came with some Hurons. They are camping about two miles below."

Du Lhut immediately walked over to the Huron scout, Black Hawk, who was at work mending a canoe.

"The dwarf tells me that a party of Hurons is encamped two miles down the river. I wish you'd see if he is telling the truth."

Black Hawk slipped into the forest without a moment's delay. When he returned, he brought two Hurons with him. The dwarf had met with the Hurons only a few days before. Both the Hurons were ill. As they had not been able to do any hunting, the three had suffered from lack of food.

Du Lhut invited the Indians to join his party; this they were glad to do. He also gave them medicine that cured them of the fever from which they were suffering. When Du Lhut and his men broke camp, the Hurons were able to do their share of rowing and helping with the portage of the boats.

A few days later, a band of painted Indians of the Algonquin and Ottawa tribes joined Du Lhut's party. From then on, every few days brought additions of either French coureurs de bois, who had been trapping and hunting, or friendly Indians. The French wood-rangers were now in the country claimed as a hunting ground by the Hurons.

Despite the cunning of the Iroquois, all the other tribes knew that nation was trying to win the Hurons away from their allegiance to the French. Some years before the Iroquois had laid waste the villages of the Hurons. They had killed and scattered all but a remnant of that once powerful tribe. Now they pretended friendship for the Hurons, but it was the intention of the Iroquois to conquer the French, and then to take captive the rest of the Hurons.

It was a long, hard journey to Michilimackinac, but with cheerful courage the French coureurs de bois overcame all obstacles. They spent no time in groaning over the hardships they had to endure. Rather, they went bravely forward, determined to reach Michilimackinac and to defeat the plans of the cunning Iroquois. The white cliffs of Michilimackinac were already in sight when they saw coming toward them a boat which held two men.

"La Durantay! Tonty!" cried Du Lhut in joyful recognition.

La Durantay and Tonty, two famous French explorers and trappers, shouted greetings to Du Lhut and other acquaintances in his little company. But their voices were drowned by the yells, laughter, and songs of the woodrangers, who rejoiced that they had at last reached their journey's end.

That evening the Frenchmen and the Hurons gathered around the council fire in one of the long bark

houses of the Hurons. There they discussed matters of importance to the settlers of Canada and to the Hurons. Flaming torches cast a bright light over the assemblage of dignified, stalwart Hurons and brave, intelligent Frenchmen, who matched their cunning with the cunning of the Indians. The French strove to convince the Hurons that the only way the Indians could escape destruction was by refusing to listen to the promises of the Iroquois.

Antoine, who would not trust Achille and Scandawatti out of his sight, placed the two boys on one of the sleeping platforms at the far end of the long house; from there, and without being in the way, they could see all that was going on.

The Hurons and Frenchmen treated one another with the greatest consideration throughout the long and tiresome discussion. There was no whispering, no laughter, no interruptions. Each spoke his mind, then sat down, and another took his place. When they had finished discussing the question, Frenchmen and Indians joined in a feast. Then the woodrangers and the Hurons began to do an Indian dance.

Though the Frenchmen were dancing with the Hurons, who were whooping, singing, and flinging their tomahawks, there was distrust in their hearts. Despite the fact that the discussion had lasted for hours, the Hurons had made no promises as to the future relations between their tribe and the French.

In the hearts of the Frenchmen there was the chilling fear that the crafty Iroquois might finally triumph. They were the kings of the wilderness, and their savage enmity was the worst evil that could befall any tribe. The hatred of the Iroquois meant the utter destruction of those upon whom it fell. It was not at all strange that the Hurons should doubt the power of the French to protect them from such fierce enemies. Had not the French themselves suffered fearfully from the attacks of the ferocious warriors of the Iroquois?

Achille and Scandawatti had gone to sleep long before the discussion came to an end. When the dancing began, they heard the shuffle of moccasined feet—the music of tortoise-shell rattles, and the dull thud of Indian drums. It was all like a dream.





CHAPTER XX

THE DWARF AWAKES IN THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD

THE Hurons, social by nature, liked the fun-loving *coureurs de bois*, who chatted or joked with them or joined in their athletic games and dances. Achille and Scandawatti found the Huron children were unselfish and good-natured. The two boys played with them day after day.

When night came, children and grown people gathered in the long house, and spent the evening talking, singing, and telling stories. There were no chairs in these Huron houses; the Hurons sat either on the floor or on the sleeping platforms. Achille and Scandawatti found that a sleeping platform makes a very comfortable seat. When the boys became cold or sleepy they could pull the soft fur rugs up over them.

One evening it was raining. Achille and Scandawatti lay on one of the platforms listening to the rain-drops, which came through the smoke-hole in the roof and fell on the blazing wood with a hissing noise. Achille was lying on his back, idly playing with a wooden ball. Suddenly it fell from his hand and rolled

under the platform. He jumped down to get it, but at once scrambled back in a panic.

"My brother, there is a dead man under there."

"A dead man!" exclaimed Little Red Savage. "Is he an Indian or a Frenchman?"

"I couldn't tell, for there is no flesh on his bones."

"Oh, now I can tell you what that means! When a Huron dies he is not buried, as among my people, but his bones are kept until the Feast of the Dead."

"How many times a year do they have this Feast of the Dead?"

"They do not have it every year. They have it only every twelve years."

"And do they keep the skeletons of their dead all that time?"

"Yes."

"I wonder how the souls of their dead like that?"

"I should think they wouldn't like it, for they cannot leave the earth until their bones are buried."

"Where do their souls stay?"

"They linger near the dwellings of their friends. Sometimes, when there is a storm, you can hear their cries as they are borne along by the wind. Sometimes you can hear them whispering among the growing corn."

Just then the dwarf entered. He stumbled and fell headlong, then rolled over on his back. When he saw the two boys, he grinned foolishly.

"You're drunk," said Little Red Savage scornfully. Just then Du Lhut and Antoine entered.

"Let's drag this fellow out," said Du Lhut, motioning to Antoine to take hold of the dwarf.

The brandy which the dwarf had been drinking made him good-natured, so when Du Lhut and Antoine dropped him to the ground, he shouted, "Good-bye!" Then he got to his feet and staggered off.

"I wish he could be cured of his drunkenness," said Du Lhut, as they entered the house. "He's too fond of brandy for his own good."

"That's true," answered Antoine, as he seated himself beside the fire. "I wonder if he could be cured? He might be frightened out of it. I believe that would be the only way to cure him." He paused to nod a friendly greeting to the two boys. "Next week is the Feast of the Dead," he continued. "If he found himself shut up in a house with a lot of skeletons, it might cure him." The two boys looked at each other, then, crouching among their blankets they began to whisper.

During the next few days, whenever they saw the dwarf in a drunken stupor, or whenever he went staggering through the village streets, they nodded to each other understandingly.

At last the great day came — the Feast of the Dead. From every direction came men, women, and children carrying the bones of their dead. The Hurons were a hospitable people, and welcomed those who came from

a distance. As night was the time when the burial of the dead was to take place, those who arrived during the day deposited the skeletons of their relatives in the long bark houses of their friends, to await the hour of this ceremony.

Achille and Scandawatti wandered from house to house, until they finally found one which they thought contained enough skeletons to frighten anyone. Ranged against the wall of this house were skeletons of all sizes. Some were leaning shoulder to shoulder, as though they were old friends reunited. Here was one whose grinning mouth was close to the head of another, as though whispering to him some secret of the other world. Others had been dumped on the earthen floor, so that they crouched as though about to spring. Still others dangled from the rafters or hung in the corners.

The two boys hurried out to look for the dwarf. It was growing dark. They would have to hasten, or the bones of the dead would all be carried into the forest for burial. Soon they saw the dwarf come out of a house, stagger a few steps, then fall headlong. By the time they reached him he was in a drunken sleep.

"Come!" called Little White Savage to a couple of Hurons who were passing. "Help us carry this slave into that house yonder," he said, and pointed to the long house which they had just left.

The Hurons picked up the dwarf, carried him in, and laid him down on the earthen floor. He made an unwieldy load. He did not struggle, though, for he was too badly intoxicated to be aware of his surroundings. The Hurons had no sooner dropped the dwarf on the floor, however, than he roused for a moment, then at once sank into a deep sleep again.

"We must cover him up, or someone will see him and carry him out," said Little Red Savage, as he pulled a bearskin from one of the platforms and covered the dwarf with it.

"It's time we tried to sober him up," said Little White Savage. "I've seen the *coureurs de bois* throw water on drunken men to sober them. I wonder if there's any water here?"

"Yes, here's a jar of water," said Scandawatti. He unloosened the straps by which the jar was suspended on the wall, pulled back the bearskin, and dashed the water in the dwarf's face. Much of it went into the slave's mouth. He gurgled and choked, struggling for breath. The shock of the cold water had the effect of rousing him somewhat from his stupor.

When the boys saw the dwarf open his eyes, they crept behind a roll of furs. Now and then they peered out to see what the dwarf was doing. They hid again when they saw that he was really awake.

The dwarf rolled about on the ground—a shapeless bundle under the bearskin—stretched and yawned,

and grunted like an animal awakening from sleep. Achille and Scandawatti—wide-eyed with excitement—giggled and whispered as from their hiding place they watched every movement he made.

"He's going to get up," whispered Little Red Savage, as the movements of the squirming body under the bearskin became more vigorous.

The dwarf was indeed making an effort to rise. There was a final upheaval, then he threw off the covering and sat up. Rising slowly to his feet, he turned around and faced the row of crouching skeletons. He thrust his head forward, his mouth agape.

Slanting through the smoke-hole in the roof, the moonlight touched the long line of grinning dead. The dwarf gave a howl of terror, then leaped toward the door. He heard the shrill childish laughter of the two boys, and stopped for an instant. Then he turned to see if there really were breathing, human beings in that awful place. Instead, he saw the fleshless form of a warrior, so long dead that his bones were covered with mold. The skeleton, with its fleshless ribs, stood upright against the wall. The air about it was filled with a misty haze.

The dwarf shrieked, gave a wild leap at the skin which served for a door to the long house, clutched it, and fell headlong through the opening, overturning a couple of Hurons who were about to enter. Each of the Indians was tenderly carrying in his arms the skele-

ton of a relative. The sprawling black body of the dwarf, his black face and rolling eyes, gave them such a fright that they dropped the bones of their dead and ran screaming into the forest. Achille and Scandawatti heard their screams, and clutched each other in terror.

"Whoo-ee! Who-ee!" came from a hemlock thicket.

"It's the Spirit of the Dead," whispered Little Red Savage. "Let's get out of here, for many spirits linger about this dwelling."

They ran out just in time to see the dwarf start through the woods on a run. They followed him, crouching in the shadows as they hastened along.

As he staggered along the trail, the dwarf continually looked back. It wouldn't have surprised him to see a troop of skeletons racing after him. He saw many Hurons cross the trail, and he asked himself, "Why are the woods filled with hurrying redskins?" It seemed that he was about to get his answer, for Hurons were approaching from every direction. When they came close to him he saw that each had something slung on his back, and when he saw what their burdens were, he sank down on the trail and hid his face in his hands. His squat body shook with fright. The flitting figures, with skeletons dangling from their backs, terrified him. Jumping up, he went scurrying back over the trail.

Achille and Scandawatti plunged into the thickets

when they saw him coming, but so soon as he had passed they crept out and followed him.

The dwarf stumbled along, too frightened to watch where he was going. Presently he ran into a squaw, who was carrying the skeleton of a child. Horror-stricken, he turned and fled in the opposite direction. Coming to a long house, he was on the point of entering it when all at once he observed that it was the very one he had left only a short time before. He didn't dare go back into that hut, filled as it was with rows of grinning skeletons, so he darted into a footpath that led into the forest. He felt safer where the undergrowth was thickest. When he heard footsteps approaching, he crawled into the heart of a thicket; then, when all was quiet, he crept out and hurried on again.

The two boys followed. The dwarf didn't know they were on his trail, and even if he had seen them he would have thought it was some wild animal crouching in the shadow of the thickets.

Having been in his drunken stupor for more than a week, the dwarf had not been told of the deep pit in the forest—a pit which had been dug to receive the bones of the dead Indians. Thinking only of escape from the sight of any more skeletons, he fled into the woods. With every step he was drawing nearer to the great burial pit of the Huron dead.



CHAPTER XXI

THE DWARF MAKES A GOOD RESOLUTION

THE wild and mournful wailing of the Indian flutes was the signal for the beginning of the ceremonies that preceded the burial of the dead. Yells, groans, and shrieks, with a clamor of wild music from drums and rattles, added to the din.

The dwarf stopped. His knees trembled so much that he had to grasp a tree for support. Afraid to go on until he should get some inkling of what this bedlam of noise meant, he crept into the underbrush.

Achille and Scandawatti turned aside and took refuge behind a tree.

"How long will he stay there?" whispered Little White Savage.

"All night, if he should fall asleep," grumbled Little Red Savage. "I wish we could frighten him out of there."

"Look!" Scandawatti had caught sight of the plumed head of a warrior.

"What is that warrior doing there?" whispered Achille.

"He seems to be waiting for someone. Let's move over to that thicket, where we can see him better."

They kept back in the shadows, and crept along warily. Now they were near enough to see the stately figure plainly. They clutched each other, and shook with silent laughter when they found that what they had taken for the plumed head of an Indian, was only a night hawk balancing itself on the top of a burnt tree. Fire had charred the tree into a form that resembled the likeness of a man.

They heard footsteps, and crouched back into the shadows to see who was approaching. A Huron warrior and his squaw stepped out into the moonlight. They were carrying a litter, on which were a couple of skeletons and several bundles of bones.

"Let's lay these down here, and go back for some more," said the warrior. "We must hasten, or we'll be too late."

The Hurons carefully placed the litter on the ground in the shadow of some thickets, and hurried back over the trail.

"Now I know how we can drive the dwarf out," whispered Little Red Savage, as he hunched up his shoulders and rocked back and forth with laughter. "We'll screech and groan and frighten him, so that he'll think wood-devils are after him. To get away, he'll have to run past this burnt tree that we thought was a warrior. We'll take these skeletons and climb

up into the tree, and when he runs past we'll fling them down on him."

"We'll frighten him so he'll never get drunk again," said Little White Savage.

The boys picked up the skeletons, climbed into the burnt tree, and placed them among the charred branches which stuck out like blackened arms. Then they dropped to the ground, picked up the bundles of bones, and climbed back into the tree again.

The dwarf was crouching under the bushes, quivering with fright. Snatching the dead from their graves to torment the living was the work of fiends, he knew. He tried to think of the prayers, which, as the priest had told him, would keep off evil spirits, but he could think of nothing but grinning skeletons. He was sure these had been sent to torment him. If good Father Lamberville had happened along just then, he would have found the dwarf more truly penitent than he had ever before been in all his life.

Achille and Scandawatti placed the bundles of bones within reach. Then they firmly grasped the skeletons and pushed them out forwards. They knew that, if the dwarf should look up, he would not think to look beyond. Dangling against the blackened tree, the skeletons were a ghastly sight, for they seemed to be walking through the air.

The dwarf was beginning to think that he was to be left in peace for the rest of the night, when some-

thing crashed into the thicket, and from just above his head came wailing cries and groans that set him to shivering again. It was a jumble of discordant cries. He knew that no human being could make such sounds; the spirits of the dead must be abroad.

Again something crashed into the thicket. It was the second bundle of bones which Little Red Savage launched at the hiding place of the dwarf. This time Scandawatti's aim was better, so the bones crashed through the undergrowth and fell in a heap close to the slave.

The bones had been tied up in a piece of deerskin in such a way that the fleshless head stuck out at one end. The dwarf gave a cry of fear when he saw the grinning skull, and scrambled from underneath the bushes. He heard groans and cries that seemed to come from above his head. He looked up. He saw horrible shapes flying through the air, for the boys were now flinging the skeletons down upon him. One fell on his head, then bounded off into his arms. Another fell astride his shoulders. The dwarf flung them off with frantic gestures and ran screaming into the forest. Bounding out on the trail, he began running in the direction of the burial pit into which the Hurons were just now flinging the bones of their dead.

The two boys watched the dwarf as he ran, lurched, and staggered along. Now he was hidden in the shadows of giant firs; now he stumbled into view where

the moonlight lay across the trail. Suddenly they saw him turn and start into the depths of the forest.

From the burial pit a chorus of yells came to the ears of Achille and Scandawatti, who hastily tumbled out of the tree in their eagerness to get down.

"We must hurry," said Achille, "or the Hurons will return before we get these skeletons back on the litter."

As each grabbed a skeleton and hurried forward, they were clutched by Antoine.

"What are you doing with these skeletons? You shouldn't disturb the dead."

"Some Hurons left them here while they went back for some more," said Scandawatti. "We were frightening the dwarf with them, so he'll not get drunk any more."

"The Hurons would be angry if they knew you had treated the bones of their dead with so little respect. Make haste and place them on the litter. Are there any more?"

Scandawatti searched among the underbrush and brought out the bundles of bones he had flung at the hiding place of the dwarf.

"This is the way the Hurons left them," said Little Red Savage, as he pulled the litter around and placed the bones beside it.

"Come! We'd better leave here before the Hurons return," said Antoine.

As they hurried through the forest in the direction of the Huron village, the boys told Antoine of the fright they had given the dwarf.

"Never let him know you had anything to do with it," was Antoine's warning. "He has a revengeful nature, and if he has cause for offense against you, he'll do you some harm."

Just then there was a sudden crashing among the undergrowth. With a warning whisper, Antoine drew the boys behind a great rock. Then the dwarf stumbled into view. He went zigzagging along the trail, now lurching into a thicket, now bumping into a tree. He was in a panic of fear. His eyes rolled like those of some goblin as he searched the shadows which now took on ghostly shapes.

"Where did he come from?" asked Little Red Savage.

"He's been running in a circle," said Antoine.

The dwarf had indeed been running about in a circle, but not because he was too terrified to sense his proper direction. It was simply because at every turn he met Hurons carrying the bones of their dead.

When the dwarf darted off into the forest, it was with the intention of seeking safety in the chapel. Only the priest, he knew, could drive away those demons who were snatching the dead from their graves to torment the living.

The dwarf gave a cry of joy when a black-robed

priest stepped out from the shadows and advanced along the trail. It was Father Engalran, the priest in charge of the mission at Michilimackinac. He was just returning from a visit to a distant village.

The dwarf fell on his knees before the good priest—and with no effort, for his legs were trembling so that he wobbled as he ran. He spread his arms out, fearful the priest might pass by and leave him. “Protect me! Protect me!” he cried. “The dead have risen from their graves.”

The priest crossed himself and uttered a prayer. Suddenly, from the burial pit, wild screams and the hoarse rumble of the drums came to his ears.

“Stay where you are,” whispered Antoine to the two boys while he himself stepped out on the trail.

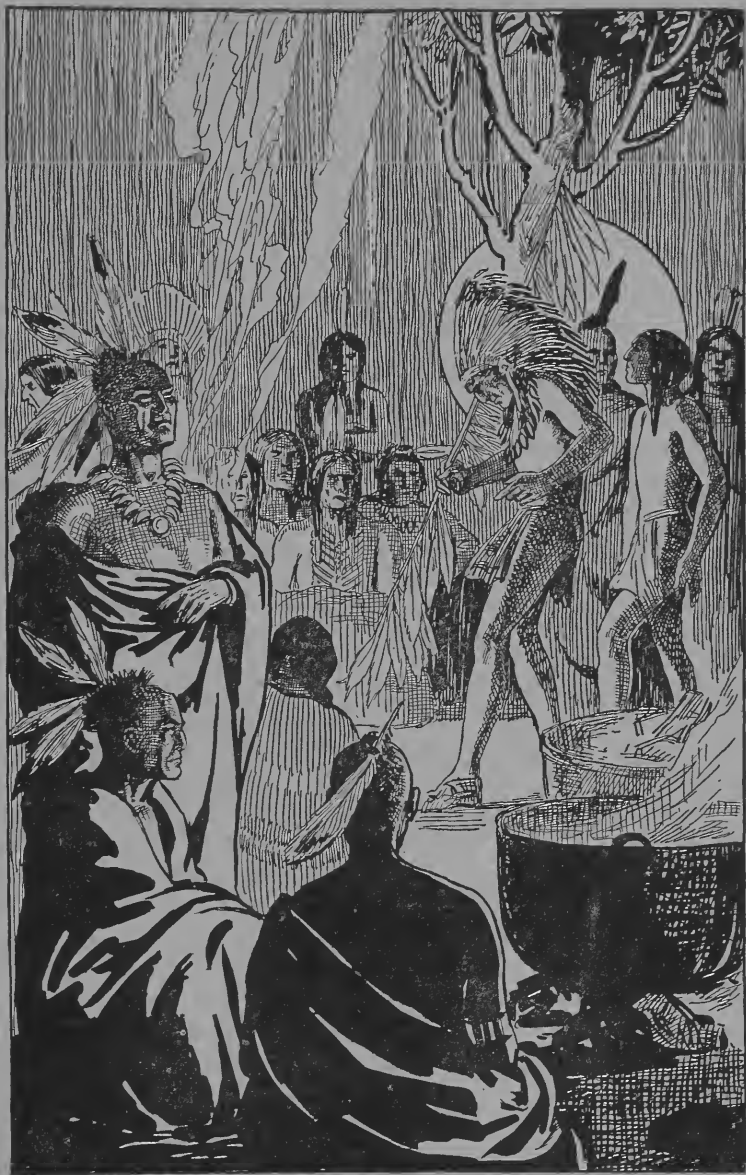
“Father Engalran,” he called.

The priest hurried forward. In a few words Antoine explained the cause of the dwarf’s terror.

“He shall think it is a punishment for the sin of drunkenness,” said the priest. “I have lectured him and threatened him, but to no purpose.”

He turned back to the dwarf, grasped his arm, and said, “Come, get up. Drunkenness is a crime, and you have been punished as you deserve.”

The dwarf rose to his feet. Clutching at the priest’s arm, he stumbled along at the side of the black-robed father. In broken sentences he stammered out the story of his awakening in the house of the dead.



"They heard the shuffle of moccasined feet."

"There were skeletons everywhere. They jeered at me. Their laughter sounded like that of the living."

"And why shouldn't they mock you — you, a human being groveling on the ground and making a beast of himself? Still worse will come upon you if you don't stop drinking liquor. The fiends will take you and throw you into a pit of fire."

"I'll never drink another drop of brandy," said the dwarf solemnly. "Never, never!"

The next morning, when the dwarf came out of his hut, he saw Achille and Scandawatti sitting near a fire over which Antoine was cooking some fish for their breakfast. He hurried forward and squatted down beside them.

"While you were soundly sleeping last night," he began, "I had a frightful adventure in the woods. A troop of hobgoblins, led by Satan himself, sprang out of the earth and rushed upon me. They threw musty bones in my face, banged me over the head with skeletons, and stuck the leg-bones of the dead into my ears. They breathed life into one of the skeletons so that it threw its arms about me and clung to my neck. I had to fight it off with my fists. Oh, it was horrible, horrible!"

"Are you sure that the mischievous wood-devils were not at the bottom of it?" asked Antoine solemnly.

"Oh, no! Oh, no! It was the evil one himself. I saw him flinging the dead of long ago into a pit of

fire. Father Engalran said it was a punishment sent on me for drunkenness. I have sworn never to taste another drop of brandy so long as I live." And so promising, the dwarf walked away wagging his head and muttering to himself.

"I know of at least two little demons that had a hand in the mischief last night," said Antoine. Then he laughed heartily and handed the boys their breakfast.





CHAPTER XXII

THE BOYS ATTEND A HURON FEAST

A HURON warrior was going through the village. "Sa-con-che-ta! Sa-con-che-ta!" he cried to every brave whom he passed.

"What's he saying?" whispered Achille to Scandawatti.

"He's saying, 'Come to the feast.'"

When the warrior came opposite the two little boys, he nodded his head. "Sa-con-che-ta! Sa-con-che-ta!" he called to them.

"We'll go," said Scandawatti. "There'll be many different kinds of meat to eat, and there will be songs and dances."

Scandawatti spoke truly. Many kettles already hung over the fires that were burning briskly in the center of the long house. There were kettles filled with bear meat, venison, wild duck, rabbits, and wild geese, and, of course, dog meat.

When the guests came, they joined the circle of warriors who were seated in the center of the long house. The blue smoke that swirled and eddied round

the long room found outlet through the smoke-hole in the roof. The leaping flames showed stern-faced warriors, young braves, and handsome squaws in festal array.

Scandawatti and Achille followed close on the heels of Antoine, who placed them between Du Lhut and himself. Antoine handed a bowl and a spoon to each of the boys because it was the Indian custom for each guest to provide his table utensils.

When everyone had eaten his fill, the circle widened to make room for the dancers. These were the young braves, who leaped and shouted as they danced to the accompaniment of their tortoise-shell rattles and their flutes.

When the dancers sat down, the dwarf, who was sprawling by the fire, applauded vigorously. This drew the attention of the Hurons, and at once they shouted to him, "A dance! A dance!"

The dwarf quickly responded. His thin little legs cut many capers that pleased the Hurons, and their "Ho-ho! Ho-ho!" of approval excited him to even greater effort. But the dwarf had forgotten the fires and the steaming kettles. All at once he took a few mincing steps to one side, then gave a great leap that landed him in a bed of hot coals. There were shrieks of laughter when he threw himself backward on the ground, for the queer black fellow made a comic picture as he rolled his eyes and screwed up his face. He

drew up his legs with quick, convulsive jerks, then flung them out as though he were trying to rid himself of them.

"Look!" cried Scandawatti. "The crab is about to shed its legs." Whereupon there came a roar of laughter from the woodrangers. The Hurons, too, saw the likeness, and shouted: "The crab! The crab!"

Their "Ho-ho! Ho-ho!" transformed the dwarf into a demon. He drew his knife and sprang at Scandawatti. Quickly Du Lhut and Antoine seized and disarmed him. Then, with the help of several Hurons, they carried him outside and dropped him to the ground. He lay there kicking and shrieking in a fit of rage.

The Hurons had never before seen anyone give way to temper in such a ferocious manner.

"Has he gone mad?" they asked Du Lhut.

"He isn't crazy. It is plain temper," answered Du Lhut.

"He is crazy mad," they said.

Attracted by the dwarf's shrieks, a crowd of Hurons quickly gathered. The way he howled and threw himself around struck them as being very funny. They nudged one another and laughed. Their ridicule brought the dwarf to his senses. He sprang up and darted through the crowd. Vowing vengeance, he hid himself in his cabin and there nursed his wrath against Little Red Savage.

Scandawatti couldn't understand why the dwarf had become angry, because the Iroquois always took the jokes of others in good part.

The dwarf was very cunning, so he put his wits to work planning how to take revenge on the little Onondaga. While wandering in the forest the next day, he came upon *Lame Wolf*, a young Huron brave. This Indian stood in awe of the dwarf because he believed the slave to be a wizard of great skill. The dwarf stopped the Indian. "I cured you of a severe illness," he began.

The Huron nodded.

"You now have a chance to repay me. Will you do it?" demanded the dwarf.

"You, my brother, have magical power. I have none. I will do for you what I can."

Now it happened that this conversation between the dwarf and *Lame Wolf* took place right on the trail where the two had met. Just at this time *Achille* and *Scandawatti* were lying asleep in the underbrush which bordered the trail at this spot. After a tiresome frolic they had crawled into the bushes, and there gone to sleep. Suddenly they were awakened by the sound of voices close at hand, and, having noted who were engaged in conversation, the two boys scented a plot which they instantly decided to overhear.

"I want you to kill the little Onondaga," they heard the dwarf say.

"If it became known to the Iroquois that a Huron had killed the little Onondaga, they would come to the land of the Hurons and blot us from the earth," answered Lame Wolf.

"There is no reason why they should know that a Huron did it. I will say that I saw an Algonquin in the woods. They will think he did it, for the Iroquois and the Algonquins are always at war."

"I do not dare kill him myself, but I'll have the Algonquins do it," said Lame Wolf.

"How can you have the Algonquins kill him?" asked the dwarf. "We are not in the country of the Algonquins."

"No, but I can take him there. The Iroquois have treated the Algonquins with great cruelty, and the Algonquins will be glad to have an Iroquois prisoner to burn and torture."

"Then take him there. Tell them not to keep him a prisoner, but to kill him."

"How shall I get hold of him?" asked Lame Wolf.

"This is my plan," replied the dwarf, as he turned and walked in the direction of the lake.

The two boys strained their ears to hear more of the plot, but the voices of the dwarf and Lame Wolf now came to them in only an indistinct murmur.

"What means do you think he will take to capture you?" whispered Achille.

"I don't know. But now that we understand what

evil is in his heart, we'll tell The Great White Chief about it."

"Then we must hurry back to the village. *Sieur Du Lhut* may go hunting today."

"He has already gone, and taken *Antoine* with him. I heard him say they will be gone a day or two."

"Then we may as well play in the woods, for neither the dwarf nor *Lame Wolf* know we are here. I wonder where they are now?"

Scandawatti raised his hand in warning. Someone was coming along the trail. Whoever it was, however, turned aside before he came near enough to be seen.

"Let's go deeper into the forest, *Scandawatti*," said *Achille*. "If we set some snares we ought to be able to catch a few birds. I'm getting hungry."

They had not gone far when they caught a glimpse of the dwarf, who, with head bent forward, was carefully examining the trail.

"We'll separate," whispered *Little Red Savage*, "and see what he is up to now."

"How shall we signal to each other?"

At that instant there was a clamor of hoarse cries overhead. A "Honk! Honk!" and the whirr of many wings told the boys that a flock of wild geese was coming up the lake.

"Honk! Honk!" *Achille* gave a cry which was exactly like that of the wild geese.

Scandawatti nodded and whispered: "We'll use the

cry of the wild geese for a signal. You go towards the lake to that big fir tree. From there, go straight into the forest, so that I may know in which direction to look for you." Then he crept through a thicket and was out of sight in an instant.

Achille started away in the direction of the lake. He slid noiselessly through the thick forest growths that blocked his way. These were dense thickets, and Little White Savage wondered if the Huron were watching him from such dark coverts. Achille made his way some distance into the forest without seeing either the dwarf or the Huron. He had a feeling of uneasiness, however, which he could not understand. Why had Scandawatti not signaled to him?

"Honk! Honk!" The call came from a distance.

Little White Savage felt like laughing and shouting because he was so relieved. His answering "Honk! Honk!" rang clear and loud.

Then there was a chorus of "Honks!" Achille now knew that the cry he had mistaken for Scandawatti's signal had really come from a flock of geese that were floating on the waters of the inlet. He was afraid some harm had befallen Little Red Savage. Why didn't Scandawatti answer his signal? He turned and followed his own trail back to the spot where he and Scandawatti had separated. From there he took up the trail of Little Red Savage. He had not gone far when he saw the dwarf. He stepped out and faced him.

"Where is Scandawatti?"

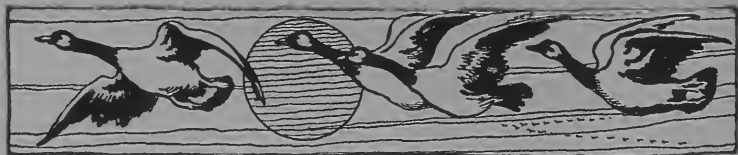
"I saw him over there," said the dwarf, and he pointed in the direction from which Achille had just come.

"You are lying," thought Achille, but he said nothing. Instead, he started back in the direction pointed out by the dwarf, as though he expected to find Little Red Savage there. But so soon as he was out of sight of the dwarf, he crept around a tree and hastened cautiously through the woods until he came to a clump of young pines. From there he could get a good view of the trail.

Then the thickets parted and the dwarf crawled out. He was laughing and wagging his head. He stopped, then began to dance. All the while he chuckled to himself as though in great glee. Achille was sure that the dwarf was rejoicing over some evil that had befallen Little Red Savage.

Noiselessly, Little White Savage crept from his hiding place and made his way back to the spot where he had first met the dwarf. There he took up the trail of his little red brother.





CHAPTER XXIII

THE HURON SEES THE OKI OF THE FALSE FACES

IN the meantime, so soon as Scandawatti left Achille, he began trailing the dwarf. He was only a little distance from the slave when he saw the Huron step out on the trail, and, after a whispered conversation with the dwarf, disappear into the woods. Here, now, were two cunning enemies to guard against. Scandawatti felt sure that the Huron was trailing him, and he knew that it would be hard to outwit the crafty fellow. Cautiously he crept through the underbrush and followed the trail to the inlet, where he expected to meet Achille. A bird's continued scolding warned him that someone was hiding near by. Suddenly a fat wood mouse ran from behind a tree. As the little Onondaga looked to see what had frightened it, he caught a glimpse of the Huron, who stood motionless at some distance. The Indian seemed to be listening.

"Honk! Honk!"

Scandawatti heard the expected signal, the "Honk! Honk!" of the wild geese. He dared not answer now, for the Huron had moved forward and was so close

that Little Red Savage could have reached out and touched him.

Suddenly the Huron turned and pounced upon Scandawatti. The Indian acted so quickly that the cry the boy tried to utter was smothered in his throat. The Huron held the writhing body of Little Red Savage until he ceased to struggle, then tossed the limp little form over his shoulder and hurried forward at a rapid pace. He went away from the lake, for fear of meeting Huron hunters who might be attracted to the inlet by the cry of the wildfowl. As the Huron gave no thought to Little White Savage when he started away through the forest, he made no effort to conceal his trail.

When Achille came to the place where Scandawatti had been captured by the Huron, he saw evidence of a struggle. Besides, he plainly saw the trail left by Lamé Wolf's moccasined feet. As the trail was only a single one, Little White Savage knew quite well that the Huron must be carrying his captive.

Lamé Wolf was the swiftest runner among the young men of his tribe, and had it not been for the load he was carrying, Achille could never have overtaken him. As it was, Little White Savage trailed through the woods for several hours before he got close enough to catch even a glimpse of the Huron.

When the Huron stopped to rest, he took no precautions to see whether or not he was being followed. He

was in his own country and among his own people, so he was not afraid. As it was growing dark, Lame Wolf began to look for a camping place in which to spend the night. He passed some giant firs and came to an open space. There he saw a fallen tree that would make a good windbreak. He laid Little Red Savage on the ground, and set about gathering fuel for his camp fire.

From behind a giant pine Little White Savage watched the Huron gather dried branches and sticks and pile them close to the fallen tree. Achille was cold, but even so he knew he did not dare to make a fire. And, unless he could find a sheltered spot, he would surely suffer from the sharp north wind. If only he could find a hollow tree! Little White Savage looked carefully at the surrounding pines, and among them he saw a dead oak tree, the lower part of whose trunk was entirely covered with vines. He wondered if it were hollow. He wished the Huron would have to go a long distance into the forest to get wood so that he might examine this tree during the Indian's absence.

But the Huron found plenty of wood close at hand, and had soon gathered enough to last through the night. He kindled his fire. Then he drew some deer-skin thongs from a pouch at his side, tied the hands and feet of Little Red Savage, and placed him within reach. He then lay down close beside the fire. He

had scarcely closed his eyes when he was startled by the gobble of a wild turkey.

Achille heard it too, just as he was almost ready to drop from cold and weariness. Instantly he was on the alert. So soon as he saw the Huron dash into the forest, he ran quickly to the vine-covered oak tree. Then he pulled aside the vines and discovered that it was hollow halfway to the top. It was just the kind of shelter he wanted for the night, so he slipped inside it and then carefully drew the vines back into place.

In a short time the Huron came back with a fine young turkey. He stripped off its feathers, spitted it on sticks so that he might more easily turn it, and placed it close to the fire. The Indian was hungry. He had not eaten since morning.

It had been Achille's intention to wait until the Huron was fast asleep, and then creep out and cut the bonds of Little Red Savage. Now, however, when the odors from the turkey which was roasting before the fire began to reach him, Little White Savage decided to snatch from the Huron not only his captive, but also the fine bird from which little rivulets of fat were now running. To do this he was going to frighten the Huron with the false face. Little White Savage was about to put it on when he glanced through the vines at Little Red Savage, whose eyelids were beginning to twitch a little. Achille wished that his little red brother might know he was close by, waiting for a

chance to help him. He dared not make a sign, though Scandawatti's eyes were now wide open and he was staring straight at the hollow tree.

Slowly consciousness returned to the brain of Little Red Savage, and with his awakening his forest craft returned. He appeared to be still asleep, although he was listening intently. With eyelids slightly raised, he peered around. He could see no one, but he felt the warmth from the fire. He was hungry and wanted food. The delicious odor of roasting turkey came to his nostrils. He quietly turned his head and caught the glitter of the Huron's eyes, which were intently fastened on him. He sat up, and steadily returned his enemy's gaze.

The Huron got up to throw more wood on the fire. He turned the other side of the turkey to the flames, and placed it so that no smoke could touch it. Then he went back and seated himself near Little Red Savage.

"No doubt my Iroquois brother thinks that he will eat of the fowl which is roasting before the fire," he began. "Not so. When I was a prisoner among the Iroquois, food was snatched from my very lips, though I was famishing. Instead of food, I was given a beating. You shall receive the same treatment. I shall beat you until the blood runs in a stream, and then, while your wounds ache and smart, you shall watch me feast. You, though, shall go hungry."

"When taken captive by the Iroquois, the Hurons receive the same treatment as the dogs of the Iroquois. It is what they deserve," was the haughty answer of Little Red Savage.

Lame Wolf scowled fiercely at Scandawatti, who met his gaze with unflinching courage. The Huron drew his knife. "I might kill you, but, instead, I shall take a stick and beat you. Well I know that a proud Iroquois would rather die than suffer blows from a Huron."

The Huron arose, went over to the pile of wood he had gathered up, and selected a stout branch which he trimmed off to the desired size. With this in his hand, he strode back to his prisoner, seized Little Red Savage, and jerked him to his feet. He had just raised his arm to strike, when a wailing cry caused him to drop his stick and turn toward the vine-covered tree.

The vines had been pushed to one side; Little White Savage had crouched close to the ground, and he was wearing the false face.

Through an opening among the vines a hideous false face was now visible. Achille crouched close to the ground and wobbled the false face about by moving his head from one side to the other. Horrible shrieks and groans came from the blood-red lips of the false face, and from time to time a red pointed tongue, like that of a snake, darted quickly in and out of the gaping mouth.

"The Oki of the False Faces!" cried Scandawatti, who knew his brother had come to rescue him.

When he was a prisoner among the Iroquois, the Huron had heard of this dreaded manitou, The Oki of the False Faces. Now, with a cry of fear, he flung Scandawatti to one side, darted around the fallen tree, and disappeared into the forest.

Little White Savage shrieked and howled, and so did Little Red Savage. The two howled so piercingly and continuously that the Huron thought there must be a troop of devils after him. He never stopped running until he grew too breathless and exhausted to run farther.

As he lay panting in a thicket, he thought of his captive and of the turkey roasting before the fire. He was hungry, and regretted the loss of the turkey, but nothing could now persuade him to return for it. He knew that many devils followed in the train of The Oki of the False Faces, and Lame Wolf felt sure that the wood was just now filled with them. He only hoped that The Oki of the False Faces would fly away with Little Red Savage, and that the Onondaga boy would be made to suffer fearful tortures.

When Achille was sure that the Huron was too far away to hear their voices, he took off the false face and then cut Scandawatti's bonds.

"Well," he said, as he stretched his feet out toward the flaming camp fire, "I'm glad we are to have turkey

for our supper. I can scarcely wait until it's done. Oh, but I'm hungry!"

"It's done now," said Scandawatti who was already testing the turkey with his knife. He cut off a generous slice and handed it to Achille, who thought he had never tasted anything quite so good. Little Red Savage helped himself, and then sat down beside Little White Savage. "You came just in time," he said to Achille. "I'll never forget that my brother saved me from being beaten by a Huron dog."

"I heard him say he would feast while you went hungry," said Achille, laughing, "but it's turning out the other way. You're feasting and he's going hungry. Du Lhut will be very angry when he hears that a Huron dared lay hands on you. Do you think that the Huron will come back to look for you?"

"No, he is afraid of the okies that wear false faces. We've nothing more to fear from him."

"I wonder if we have enough wood to keep us warm."

"Yes, if we sleep inside the hollow tree. We can build our fire right in front of the opening. Then we'll be safe from wild beasts and sheltered from the wind."

The boys pulled some of the burning brands over to the hollow tree and made a small fire before the opening. Then they moved the pile of wood close to the tree, so that they could reach out and get sticks as they were needed. Inside the hollow trunk they made a soft

bed of leaves and pine needles, and lay down well content with their camping place. In a short time both were fast asleep.

But Little White Savage began to dream. In his dreams he saw the Huron creeping stealthily through the wood. Then he heard a shriek and instantly he cried out in alarm.

"It's a panther," said Little Red Savage, who had been awakened by the wailing cry.

The panther's padded feet made no sound, but when the boys saw its flaming eyes in the shadows, they thought it was watching them. Scandawatti hurled a flaming brand into the air and the panther sprang back into the thicket.

The boys piled on more wood and slept for the rest of the night, undisturbed by prowling animals. It was broad daylight when they awoke. They had no difficulty in following the trail to the Huron village, and arrived there to find Du Lhut and Antoine making anxious inquiries for them.

Du Lhut was very angry when he heard of the conspiracy to carry off Little Red Savage, which had been made between the dwarf and the Huron.

"What'll you do about it?" asked Antoine. "The Hurons believe that the dwarf is a magician, and that he can see into the future. He has convinced them that he had a vision in which he was instructed to warn the Hurons not to make a treaty with the Iroquois.

He told them that if they did so they would be entirely wiped out. If we anger him, he will pretend to have had another vision, and then he will tell them to make the treaty."

"I'll threaten to hand him over to the Iroquois," said Du Lhut.

"I had nothing to do with it," declared the dwarf when taken to task by Du Lhut.

"A thousand lies will not clear you!" declared Du Lhut. "This is what I shall do. If the little Onondaga is carried away or killed while he is a hostage in our hands, I shall hand you over to the Onondagas to be treated as they see fit. You can imagine what your fate will be."

This threat kept the dwarf from making further attempts on the life of Little Red Savage. He continued, however, to show his hatred of Scandawatti by scowling and mumbling whenever the boy was near.

"The Rat" was very angry when he heard of Lame Wolf's attempt to carry off Scandawatti. "What does he mean," he cried, "by putting the life of a nation in peril? The Iroquois would destroy us utterly if any harm came to the little Onondaga."

When Lame Wolf heard that he was to be called before a council of the chiefs, he left the Huron country, and went to the country of the Illinois. Nor was he again seen in the Huron village until Du Lhut and his company had left Michilimackinac.



CHAPTER XXIV

THE DWARF LEAVES THE COUNTRY OF THE HURONS

“WELL, I wonder how matters are coming on between the Iroquois and the Hurons?” Antoine muttered to himself, when he saw Du Lhut in earnest conversation with one of the Huron chiefs.

“Antoine,” Du Lhut called, beckoning him forward. “Have you noticed the dwarf being much in the company of those young Mohawks who came here last week?”

“No, I’ve not seen the dwarf for a week or more. Since he stopped drinking he has been so morose and sullen that I have had as little as possible to do with him.”

“Yes, when he isn’t full of brandy, he’s full of malice. But Big Knife, here, tells me that he fears the dwarf is influencing the young Hurons against us.”

“In what way?”

“Well, you know that he claims to have dreams of great meaning. Since many of the young Hurons think he is a big medicine man, he exerts great influence over them.”

"What are you going to do about it?"

"I'm going to put a stop to it."

"It is at night that he runs the woods," said Big Knife.

"To-night, then, we'll follow him."

"My son will guide you through the forest. He knows the places where the young men congregate."

"We'll wait for him at the edge of the wood, near that charred tree," said Du Lhut, pointing to a blackened tree which had been struck by lightning.

It was some hours after nightfall when the young Huron came to the appointed place. Without a word he took the lead, motioning the Frenchmen to follow him. The young redskin went swiftly forward. He made his way without hesitation in and out among the black fir trees. When he had advanced some distance into the wood, he stepped from the trail into a clump of thick-growing firs and crouched behind them.

"We'll wait here. The dwarf has not yet left the village."

After a period of waiting, the young Indian touched Du Lhut and Antoine, who were crouching near him. "They are coming now," he whispered.

The dwarf, in company with several Mohawks, slipped quietly past. Then all were lost in the darkness.

Soon the Huron again took the trail, going forward slowly and cautiously, his ears alert to every sound.

Steadily he pressed onward. When he saw the glow of a camp fire on tree trunks and thickets, he dropped on his knees and began to creep forward. Du Lhut and Antoine followed closely after.

Creeping close to the thicket that guarded the fire from their sight, they looked through. Several Mohawks were squatting about the fire, but nothing could be seen of the dwarf. Soon the Frenchmen heard footsteps, and from the deep shadows of the wood the dwarf stepped out. Behind him came several Hurons.

"This is the way of it," began the dwarf. "Just as I told my Mohawk brothers, I saw another vision last night. In that vision The Great Manitou spoke to me and bade me tell the Hurons that the Iroquois are their best friends. I, who know the French, tell you to trust to no promises which the men of that nation may make. They are liars and deceivers. They promise to protect you, but they will hand you over to your enemies. I, who know their secrets, tell you this is true."

Du Lhut stepped out into the glow of the firelight, and faced the dwarf.

"Tell these Mohawks and these Hurons that you lie," Du Lhut said sternly, his gun within a few inches of the dwarf's head.

The dwarf's naturally dark face took on a grayish pallor. He turned, as though to escape, but found Antoine's gun in his face. That stalwart woodranger

barred his flight. Sullenly he turned and faced Du Lhut. His head was thrust forward and his breath came hard. His rolling eyes shrank before the angry sparkle in Du Lhut's.

"I—I—may be mistaken," he stammered.

"Tell these red brothers of yours, that you had no vision last night, and that you know nothing of our secrets." Du Lhut's gun went up with a threatening gesture.

"I had no vision last night," repeated the dwarf, mechanically, "and I know nothing of the Frenchmen's secrets."

"Tell them you lied," commanded Du Lhut sternly.

"I—lied." The dwarf turned aside guiltily, when he saw the look of scorn on the Hurons' faces. Then, with an inarticulate cry of fury, he seized the barrel of Du Lhut's gun, thrust it aside, darted past the Hurons, and disappeared into the forest.

"Shall I bring him back?" asked Antoine.

"No, let him go. You see, now, my brothers," Du Lhut said, turning to the Hurons, "that the dwarf was trying to deceive you."

"Yes, we will believe nothing more that he tells us."

"And as for the dwarf, he shall be shot for his treachery to the French," Du Lhut said angrily.

The Mohawks, who had been silent witnesses of the encounter between Du Lhut and the dwarf, now arose. Without a word they stepped out on the trail, went

in the direction the dwarf had taken, and were soon out of sight.

"The dwarf should have brought some of his magical powers to bear on you, when you were making him take back his words," said Antoine, laughing. "But, anyway, it is plain to be seen that he is in league with the Mohawks."

"Yes, and that he is a traitor to the French and the Hurons.

"Can you not see," continued Du Lhut, turning to the assembled Hurons, "that an alliance with the Iroquois means the final blotting out of the Huron race?"

"Yes, my brother," said one of the Hurons, a stalwart young chief. "Our minds have been sick, but now they are well. We shall spurn the offers of the Iroquois, for we know they are our enemies."

"You think, then, that we have nothing more to fear from the plotting of the Iroquois?" questioned Antoine, as he and Du Lhut made their way back to the village.

"Yes, that matter is settled. The older chiefs of the Hurons have always been on our side, and now that the young chiefs have come over to us, we may go back to Canada without fear that our allies will turn against us. But that doesn't lessen the dwarf's crime, and he shall not escape just punishment."

But the next morning, neither the dwarf nor the Mohawks were to be found. "The Mohawks have taken



"What are you making?"

the trail for the country of the neutrals, and the dwarf has gone with them," was the news brought by the coureurs de bois who had been sent to search for him.

"I'm glad he has allied himself with our enemies, rather than with our friends," said Du Lhut. "If he's not with us, he cannot betray our plans. I'm sure that Sieur de Casson will be glad to know that he is finally rid of the brute."

A few days later the coureurs de bois began loading their boats.

"If you have anything you want to take back to Canada, you must bring it to me so that I can store it away with my belongings," Antoine said to the two boys.

So Achille and Scandawatti brought their treasures, of no great value, but highly esteemed by them.

"Come with me into the forest," said Scandawatti to Achille, when they had seen their belongings safely stowed away.

"Don't go far," cautioned Antoine. "We start on our homeward journey tomorrow, and we don't want to spend several days hunting for lost children."

"We'll not go so far but that the sound of your voices will reach us," said Scandawatti.

When they entered the forest Little Red Savage turned to Achille with a serious air. "There's something I must attend to. It has to do with my oki, my guardian oki."

Achille nodded understandingly. He asked no questions, for he would know in good time. Now he only followed in the footsteps of Little Red Savage, who was walking rapidly along a path that ran straight into the forest.

Presently the two boys came to a small stream that flowed sluggishly between banks of clay. Achille dropped down on a log to rest, while Scandawatti began scooping up handfuls of clay. This he threw into a heap, until he had made a great mound of it. He then dipped his hands into the water, and began moulding and patting the clay into shape.

"What are you making?" asked Little White Savage when he saw Scandawatti moulding the clay into a squat human figure with pointed ears.

"I'm making an image of my guardian oki, so that I may talk to him and so that he may hear me."

"What are you going to say to him?"

"I'm going to scold him. He shouldn't have let the Huron take me captive. He must have been sleeping in the sun," said Scandawatti gravely.

Achille, too, felt that Scandawatti's guardian oki had not been watchful enough. He looked gravely on, listening without comment to the whispered complaint that came from the lips of Little Red Savage.

Scandawatti put his lips close to the clay ear of the image so that no word might be lost. He spoke softly and his tone was plaintive.

"I trusted you," he murmured, "but you gave me no warning that my enemy was near."

Scandawatti stepped back and looked searchingly into the face of the image. The expressionless clay gave him no comfort. He raised his hand. "You were negligent and careless!" he shouted. He shook his fist vigorously to emphasize his rebuke, and his hand struck the image a glancing blow that knocked off its head.

Little White Savage rolled off the log, chuckling. Scandawatti hastened to apologize.

"I didn't mean to strike you, but you must take better care of me." He then took his hatchet, chopped the image into little bits, and buried them in the earth. "If an enemy should find these pieces," he explained to Achille, "it would give him power over me."





CHAPTER XXV

THE MOHAWKS DIG UP THE WAR HATCHET

WHILE Du Lhut labored in the interests of the French at Michilimackinac, Father Lamberville was carrying on his work as a missionary among the Mohawks. When the priest found himself shut out from the councils of the chiefs, he felt sure that the Iroquois were about to dig up the red hatchet of war.

Though the Mohawks were crafty, the priest was crafty, too. Pretending that he was going to visit the Oneidas, Father Lamberville left the village one morning and hid in the forest. It was several hours after nightfall when he returned to the Mohawk village. Long before he arrived he could hear the boom of the Indian drums and the wailing of the flutes. He had not been mistaken. The Mohawks were indeed planning to go on the war path.

When the priest passed from the forest into the glow of the fires burning briskly in the village, he discovered that the Indians had just concluded a feast on dog meat. All about he saw braves in war paint and feathers; too, he saw them striking their hatchets into

the *ga-on-do-te*, the war post. Now he knew that the time had come to send a warning to the French. Accordingly, he sought out a Huron slave.

"Will you try to escape from the Mohawks if I help you?" he whispered.

"Yes," said the Huron, "but how can I obtain food for my journey?"

"I'll have some dried meat and parched corn ready for you tomorrow evening," replied the priest. "Can you be ready to go at that time?"

"Tomorrow my master is going to the lake with his brother. In the morning I'll go fishing with his young son, but if I can sneak away from him, I'll do so and come back here. If you'll hide the corn and meat under the great rock that cuts the trail about three miles beyond the village, I'll be able to get it."

"I shall do so," said the priest. "And I shall also place some food there for you to eat before you start, for you look as though you had been but poorly fed."

"I don't get as much to eat as do the dogs that scramble for the bones thrown away by my master. I'd rather die trying to warn the French of their danger, than to endure this life any longer."

The Mohawks, in one of their incursions into Canada, had captured a converted Iroquois from the Jesuit mission near Montreal. The morning after his conversation with the Huron, Father Lamberville met this Iroquois in the forest.

"My son, are not the tribes of the Iroquois making ready to attack the French?" asked the priest.

"No," replied the Iroquois, sharply. "Only the Clan of the Bear among the Mohawks will take up the war hatchet. The Oneidas, the Onondagas, the Cayugas, and the Senecas will keep the treaty they have made with the French."

"Will the Mohawks travel on foot through the wilderness, or will they make the trip in canoes?" asked Father Lamberville.

"There are even now many Mohawks on Lake Ontario. They are making canoes, and they already have made enough to carry hundreds of my people," replied the Indian.

"That means they will go up the St. Lawrence," said Father Lamberville. "It means, too," the priest muttered to himself, "that Canada must be warned of her peril."

At that moment they heard a party of Mohawks approaching, so the priest turned and went back to the village.

Father Lamberville always kept a store of food ready for an emergency. He now drew on this to supply the Huron slave with food, and then made his way to the big rock three miles from the village.

The sun had gone down when the Huron started on his journey to Canada. The way was long and hard, but the fear of the terrible Iroquois drove him ever

onward so that there was no rest for him. Worn to skin and bones by hunger and exhaustion, he at last reached Montreal and delivered Father Lamberville's message to the governor.

At this time Du Lhut and his brave little company of *coureurs de bois* were not many miles from Montreal. Their trip down the Ottawa River had not been attended by any serious mishaps, but, even so, Du Lhut was uneasy. He felt sure that the Iroquois were planning mischief.

The men were all gathered around the camp fire after a hard day's rowing, when Du Lhut announced his plan. "I'm going to send some of you men to Quebec with the boats, and I'm going to take the others with me on a little expedition I have planned."

"Aren't you going to Montreal?" asked Antoine.

"No," said Du Lhut. "I'm going to cut across the country to the St. Lawrence, because I fear the Iroquois will make raids on the French settlements along the river front. Of late I've been thinking of Henri Bair. You remember that on account of Adele's illness, he was unable to go with us to Michilimackinac," continued *Sieur Du Lhut*.

"He lives in a well-fortified village," said Jean Laut, "but of course that's no protection to a man when he's hunting or trapping. You've not said, though, what men you'll take with you."

"You will settle by lot who are to go along with me,

and who are to take the boats to Quebec. You, Antoine, will of course have to accompany me in order to look after Achille and the little Onondaga."

The division of the little company was arranged in a friendly spirit, and Du Lhut and his men, with provisions and ammunition in their knapsacks, took the trail through the woods to the St. Lawrence River. When they came to the river, Du Lhut sent his Indian scouts up and down the water front in search of signs of the Iroquois.

In a short time Black Hawk came hurrying back. "A party of a hundred Mohawk warriors have crossed the river a quarter of a mile from here," he reported.

"Do you think that's the entire war party?" asked Du Lhut.

"No," said Black Hawk. "They left signs which show that another company of warriors is following them. They will not be far behind the others."

"Then we must hurry forward with all speed," interrupted Du Lhut. "We must warn the settlers of their danger. It's frightful to think of the horrible cruelties that will be inflicted on the men, women, and children who fall into the hands of those savages," said Du Lhut. "And Black Hawk," he added, "watch the river! We must be careful or we shall be trapped between these two war parties."

Black Hawk was gone but a short time when he suddenly re-appeared. He approached Du Lhut.

"There are a dozen boats filled with Mohawk warriors on the river," he said. "They are approaching the shore. Come with me and I'll guide you to a place in the forest where, unseen, we can watch them. They are following the trail of the war party that passed two hours ago."

Noiselessly the woodrangers now followed the Huron scout. They scarcely breathed as they stood awaiting Black Hawk's signal to cross the trail.

In the woods there was complete silence. But Black Hawk could interpret silence as well as sound. The redskin pointed toward a place in the forest where the trees grew close together. At first the Frenchmen could see nothing. Then, all at once, there was a movement where the shadows lay like black splotches on the trail, and out stepped an Iroquois warrior. Behind him trailed a long line of redskins. They were young men, all members of the Mohawk nation.

Du Lhut anxiously watched the wavy line of warriors as they avoided rocks and thickets. He well knew that his own little company would be cut to pieces in any conflict with this overwhelming force. The doughty Frenchman scowled at the crackling of a twig under the foot of a restless woodranger, and raised a warning hand to rebuke his careless follower. A lack of caution now would cost them their lives.

The glittering eyes of the fierce Mohawks searched thicket, tree, and ground for signs of other occupants

of the wood. As the war party was not far distant from the French settlements, the Indians hoped to come upon some of the paleface scouting parties, so that the little company of Frenchmen was not only in danger of being discovered by one of those keen-eyed warriors, but it was also in danger from the Indian scouts who were sent out in advance of a war party.

The redskins walked in single file. To Du Lhut and his men, it seemed that hours passed while the Indians were marching along. When the last one had disappeared into the forest, Du Lhut turned to his followers.

"They'll probably attack one of the settlements on the river front," he said. "By making a circuit we may get near enough to help some of those who try to escape. Death and destruction have at last come upon Canada!" he groaned.

"And it isn't a swift death, either, that comes with these redskins. It's slow roasting in a circle of blazing fires," muttered Antoine.





CHAPTER XXVI

THE ATTACK ON THE VILLAGE

DU LHUT and his *coureurs de bois* had no difficulty in following the trail of the Iroquois warriors, whose destination was a little village on the St. Lawrence River, not far from the seigniory of *Sieur de Casson*.

The scouts, sent out by the Mohawks, had brought word to the war party that the inhabitants of this village, so confident there would be no serious trouble with the Iroquois, placed no sentinels on their walls. They even left the stockade gate wide open for the entrance of friend and foe alike.

"If we could only get ahead of those red fiends, and give warning to the people on the river front," said Antoine.

"But you forget the other war party of a hundred or more which has two hours' start of us," answered Du Lhut.

"That's so," said Antoine with a melancholy shake of his head.

"Some warning of the approach of these redskins

may have been carried to Montreal," said Du Lhut. "In that case, parties of *coureurs de bois* will be out scouting for signs of the savages, and we may be able to collect a force big enough to help the settlers along the river. But come! We must waste no more time."

The woodrangers traveled as swiftly as they could, but they did not dare to take the open trail for fear of being seen by some lurking Mohawk. The shadows lengthened, and as night came on the forest paths became gloomy. .

"If we only had wings," groaned Antoine. "Already those redskins of the advance party are hiding in the thickets near some village. And there's no one to warn the poor people of their danger!"

Du Lhut made no reply. He was looking ahead, interpreting the signs of the forest as shrewdly as do the Indians themselves.

Like Antoine, many of the woodrangers felt that just now they would like to fly. Walking seemed a very slow method of traveling whenever they reflected that their wives and children might be killed by the knives of these ferocious savages.

It was as Antoine said: Not far from the doomed village the war party, whose trail they had crossed earlier in the day, was safely hidden in the dense underbrush which choked the wood.

It was marvelous how such a force of warriors could conceal themselves without giving an indication of their

presence to those who passed in and out of the village. On such an occasion as this the cunning redskins never moved about restlessly or uneasily. As immovable as though cut from stone, they lay flat on the ground. All slept, except those who were on watch. It was not until a couple of hours after the lights in the houses had been extinguished that the Mohawks ventured to crawl from their hiding place, and walk about in the dark shadows of the wood.

Like shadows meeting shadows the painted warriors of the second war party came forth from the shelter of trees and thickets. These were the Indians whom Du Lhut and his men had watched as they passed through the forest.

The chiefs of the different tribes immediately withdrew to take counsel regarding the best plan of attack. They decided not to wait longer, but to attack the village at once. The redskins were sure that, with the big force they had, they could take the little village by assault at any time. They knew, too, that only by a surprise attack could they capture it without a fight. And the Iroquois did not want to fight. They wanted to slaughter the men, women, and children as the unfortunate villagers fled from the burning cabins.

A cleared space between the village and the forest, a space bare of bushes or stumps, had to be crossed. The only way for the Mohawks to cross this clearing, unseen, was to get down on their hands and knees and

creep across. Warily the redskins stole out from the shadows of the big trees and began their slow journey. Carefully they crept across the ground. At times they scarcely moved. Silently, steadily they advanced toward the sleeping village. Fleecy clouds swept over the face of the moon, and, in the half light, the slowly moving bodies looked like skulking wolves.

The redskins could see that the gate was wide open, that there were no sentinels on guard—no one to prevent them from entering. There were no lights within the palisaded enclosure. Inside the houses it was pitch dark, except where live coals in the open fireplaces shone red among the ashes.

No sounds came from the village; no warning of the approaching foe came to the sleeping inhabitants; all was peace and quiet. Even the dogs heard nothing suspicious in the faint rustling made by the many Indians who crawled slowly along.

The Mohawks first reached the village gate. They crept in and silently ranged themselves along the palisade. The redskins who came last, however, crowded in, leaping over one another in their savage eagerness to enter. Then there was a clamor of screeches and quavering war whoops, as the Indians savagely pounded with their hatchets upon the cabin doors. The ferocious cries of the redskins were answered by screams from frightened women and children, and by crackling shots from the muskets of the men.

Where the doors were too stout to be broken in, the Indians climbed up and hacked at the roofs. They screamed down the chimneys and applied flaming torches to the dry thatch. When doors gave way with a crash, the savages—knife and tomahawk in hand—leaped through to butcher fathers and mothers who fought to defend their children. The children ran here and there like frightened rabbits as they tried to find safe hiding places. The women and children who succeeded in leaving the cabins had little chance of escape. Some of them ran toward the gate, only to meet death on the way. Some fell to the ground, too weak from fright to make any resistance. Others fought bravely before they were finally overpowered by their cruel foes.

The din of the massacre was fearful. The men screamed as they fought, while struggling redskins and Frenchmen trampled over the bodies of the dead and dying. The barking of the village dogs and their shrill yelps of agony, as they were hacked by the knives of the savages, added to the uproar.

This was the village in which Henri Bair and his little daughter Adele made their home. Now, while the redskins—whooping and yelling, murdering and scalping—were splintering the doors with their hatchets, Bair stood in the middle of his cabin holding Adele in his arms. He was looking for a hiding place, but he found none. At last the Frenchman drew his

pistol. He had firmly determined to shoot his child and then die fighting. Suddenly, however, his eyes fell upon a fur rug at his feet—a rug of black, curly skin taken from a dog that had been killed while it was defending Bair from a panther.

"You saved my life, you may now save my child's," muttered Bair, as he covered Adele with the skin. He fastened it about her ankles and wrists, so that she would look like a shaggy dog if she crawled on her hands and knees.

"Remember, Adele, you must not cry. If you see the savages coming towards you, you must drop to the ground as though wounded. Creep along the palisade until you come to the gate, then crawl to the thick clump of saplings that grow at the edge of the wood. When you think no one is looking, slip away through the woods. The farther from the village you can get, the better chance of escape you will have."

Blows on the door, and the wild screeches of Indians outside, reminded Bair that he had no time to lose. He picked Adele up and ran to a corner of the cabin where a thick piece of oak had been driven in to eke out a log. With his ax and a thick-bladed knife, Bair forced out the slab of wood. This made an opening big enough for Adele to crawl through. There was no time for saying good-bye, not even for a last embrace. Already the timbers of the door were beginning to give away.

Bair pushed the child through the opening, and when he saw that she had got clear of the cabin without being seen, he began to think of his own safety. He knew that a dozen redskins would spring into the cabin so soon as they had broken down the door, and that if he stayed inside to face them he was only throwing his life away. Then, suddenly, he thought of the chimney. It might be the means of saving him. He took down his musket from its rack on the wall and ran to the huge fireplace. Satisfied that no redskins were on the roof, Bair climbed up the chimney to a projecting stone that furnished a resting place for his feet. Reaching up, he grasped the top of the chimney and drew himself onto the roof, just as the savages burst through the door of his cabin.

The door gave way so suddenly that the Indians fell with it. They tumbled headlong into the cabin, making such a racket that they failed to hear the noise Bair made when he sprang across the roof and onto the ground.

Bair saw a heap of slain settlers whose scalped bodies had been thrown into a pile. He crawled over to the pile of bodies and concealed himself among them. Meantime, when the Indians saw that the owners of the cabin had escaped, they wasted no time looking for them, but ran out in search of other victims.



CHAPTER XXVII

THE FALSE FACE AGAIN APPEARS TO THE MOHAWKS

A YOUNG Mohawk who caught sight of Adele as she neared the gate gave a war whoop and fired at her. In her terror the child fainted. Laughing, the Indian fired again, then followed his companions in their flight.

Presently Adele recovered consciousness and crawled to the gate where she hid among some bushes. In a moment she saw the dwarf at the very instant when he espied her. The child screamed in terror. The dwarf chuckled: "So I've found you, my little beauty!"

There was a ferocious grin on the dwarf's face as he clutched her and dragged her from her hiding place. Adele's cries of fright drew the attention of a band of young Mohawks, with whom the dwarf had been running the woods. Here was amusement to their liking. Whooping and yelling, they formed a circle around her.

"Scalp her first, then kill her," cried the dwarf. Then, catching sight of a post just outside the gate, he shouted, "No, let's torture her first." In a fit of rage

he grasped Adele by the throat and shook her violently, cursing and screaming like a madman as he did so.

The savages tore Adele from the dwarf's grasp, dragged her to the post, and tied her so that she hung several feet above the ground. They then piled wood about her and set fire to it.

When the terrified child saw the flames creeping through the pile of sticks, she tried to scream but was unable to utter a sound. She saw only a confusion of glaring flames and dancing redskins. Then, as in a dream, she caught sight of a frightful being rising from behind the thicket.

When at some distance from the village, Du Lhut and his men heard an unearthly cry—a long quavering war whoop—which told them that the redskins had commenced the bloody work of butchering and scalping. With the fierce yells of the savages were mingled the shrieks of women and children, while tongues of flame and clouds of smoke left no doubt as to the capture and destruction of the village.

Without a word Du Lhut and his men started on a run toward the doomed settlement. Suddenly they stopped. Someone was crashing through the underbrush. In a moment the woodrangers had sheltered themselves behind the big trees which edged the well-beaten road. They cautiously looked out, and saw a man stumble across the trail. He ran a few steps, then

dropped to his knees. Swaying back and forth, he groaned as if in extreme agony.

"O Mary, Mother of Christ! Help! Help!" he cried.

Du Lhut stepped forward. "You are in trouble. Can I help you, my friend?" he asked.

The man looked up.

"Mon Dieu! Henri Bair!" exclaimed Du Lhut. "And where is Adele?"

"I don't know. She may be roasting in the fires of the Mohawks," said Bair. Then he briefly told of the little one's escape from his cabin.

"But she may have got clear of the village," Du Lhut insisted.

"Yes, to lose herself in the forest — to die of hunger and exhaustion."

"Have you tried to find her?"

"Yes."

"Did you tell her where to go, if she got clear of the village?"

"Yes. I told her to slip into that clump of saplings not far from the gate. I looked there for her when I came out, but she isn't there. Since then I have been searching the wood."

"She may have escaped from the village and may now be hiding among the saplings. We'll go as near as we dare and then help you search for her."

When Du Lhut and his men got close to the village,

they saw that a band of Mohawks was about to torture one of the captives. Creeping forward noiselessly, the woodrangers hid behind the bushes. Antoine, who was in the lead, made an opening in the thicket and peered through. He saw the Mohawks dancing around a post to which something was bound—something too small for a man—something that was unmistakably a child. He looked closely. There was a familiar look about the little white face.

"Heavens!" he whispered to Henri Bair, who was crouching near him. "It's Adele. The fiends are about to torture her." Bair struggled to rise, but Antoine grasped his arm and held him down.

"If you attack them openly, you'll only destroy yourself without saving Adele. It's only by some trick that we can hope to get the little one out of their clutches."

"I have the false face with me," whispered Achille, who was standing close to Antoine.

"The very thing!" muttered Antoine. "Put it on, and I'll place you on my shoulder so that your head will appear above the thicket."

"When I hold him up so that he shows above the thicket, make all the noise you can," whispered Antoine to the woodrangers who were crouching near him.

As Antoine raised Achille to his shoulders, a ray of light from the fire flashed along the top of the thicket. Just then the false face appeared—distinct and terrible. Shrieks and groans came from the wood-

rangers hidden in the thicket, and Achille's wailing cry rose piercingly clear.

One glance was enough for the Mohawks. They knew that if the eyes of The Oki of the False Faces should meet the eyes of a warrior—even though for only an instant—that warrior would be turned into a tree of the forest and would never again mingle with his people.

The warning cry of Little Red Savage, "The Oki of the False Faces!" filled their ears as they fled in terror of this great manitou. Afraid of the gloomy wood, where okies and demons had their habitation, they fled for safety to the palisaded village, now made light as day by the glare of the burning cabins.

When the dwarf heard the Mohawks' cries of terror and saw them pointing to the thicket, he looked behind him. When he caught sight of the false face, and heard the shrieks and groans of the woodrangers, he was as frightened as the Mohawks themselves. He darted behind a tree for safety. When Henri Bair sprang out, cut the thongs that bound Adele, and bore her away in his arms, the dwarf knew that it was once again only a trick of the *coureurs de bois*.

All had been done so quickly that when the dwarf hurried from his hiding place, there was no one in sight. Wild with rage at the thought that he was being cheated of his revenge, he bounded forward, shrieking, "Come back! Come back! They are fool-



"The redskins walked in single file."

ing you with the false face!" He waved his arms frantically and danced in rage. But the Mohawks knew too well the power of The Oki of the False Faces, so they closed their ears to the cries of the misshapen dwarf.

A party of young Senecas, who had been drinking too freely of French brandy, almost ran over the dwarf as they hurried out of a burning cabin. Bloody scalp locks dangling from their belts were proof of what they had been doing. And here now was another victim ready to hand. They grabbed the dwarf and began tossing him into the air. Some pulled one way, some, another, until he screamed in agony. They were now not far from the gate, and as they jostled each other they pushed through and saw the fire which the Mohawks had kindled only a short time before.

"Burn him! burn him!" The cry came from a dozen throats.

The dwarf's piercing shriek, "Help! Help! Save me! Save me!" reached Du Lhut and his men. Screened by the thickets, they watched the savages bind the screaming wretch to the post.

The arms of the dwarf were extended in the direction in which his little master had gone, as though begging for help.

"Let's go back," said Little White Savage, his eyes filling with tears.

"He's suffering the fate he intended for Adele,"

was Du Lhut's grim reply, "and I'll not risk the life of a single one of my brave followers for his sake."

"Yes, he's stewing in his own poison," said Antoine.

More than ever the black dwarf now looked like a crab. Bound to the post too firmly to break loose, he flung his legs about and beat the air with his arms in an agony of torture. His face was horrible to look upon; his eyes rolled in a frenzy of fear and suffering and his howling was dreadful to hear.

Du Lhut motioned to his followers: "Come away. He's done for."

"It was an awful death to die!" sobbed Achille.

"The good priest says that such suffering fits souls for paradise," said Pierre Bondon, whose son had been burnt by the Iroquois.

"Yes. But the dwarf will have no burial," replied Achille.

"He'll need no burial, more's the pity," answered Du Lhut. "There's his bosom friend, the Mohawk, Twisted Hair, who has come to rescue him. The dwarf has escaped death this time."





CHAPTER XXVIII

THE IROQUOIS LOSE THEIR CAPTIVES

DAYLIGHT had come, so Du Lhut and his little company could now travel more rapidly. They hurried along and soon found themselves some distance from the village. Then they suddenly came upon a company of *coureurs de bois* sent out by the governor of Montreal.

De Chavanne, who was in command, hurried forward. "Of all good fortune, this is the greatest!" was his greeting. "Surely, together, we can do something against these savages."

"I'm sure we can," answered Du Lhut. "I saw the redskins rolling some casks of brandy out to the edge of the forest. They'll soon be so drunk that we can, at least, take their prisoners away from them."

"But what are we going to do with these children?" asked Henri Bair.

"It will be best for you and Antoine to take them back to the seigniory of *Sieur de Casson*," replied Du Lhut. "We can't be looking out for their safety while we're attacking the savages."

"I hate to miss the fighting," said Antoine.

"You'll get all the fighting you want before the year is out," declared Du Lhut.

"Come on then! We'll take the direct trail to the seigniory. Follow close on my heels," Antoine said to Achille and Scandawatti, as he stepped from among the sheltering trees. With gun in readiness for instant use, he walked swiftly along the trail. Achille followed close after; then came Scandawatti. Henri Bair, carrying Adele in his arms, came last.

"Do you think there's any danger of them being waylaid by the savages?" asked Du Lhut.

"No," answered De Chavanne. "We just came from that direction, and there were no signs of Indians in the woods. They're all congregated over there," he said, as he pointed toward the burning village.

"Well, we mustn't remain here, or we'll be seen by some of the Mohawk scouts," Du Lhut said, as he beckoned to the assembled woodrangers. "Come with me. I know of a sheltered spot where we can lay our plans without being interrupted." He left the trail and led them into a dense jungle; they forced their way through it for some distance and then found themselves in a clearing shadowed by big trees.

"This is the very spot where those savages have been hiding," said Du Lhut, when he saw the signs of recent occupation. "Well, it's our turn now."

"Just listen to that!" exclaimed De Chavanne, as a dreadful cry came to them from a distance.

"Yes, we must hurry. Those fiends are torturing some poor fellow."

Hidden in the dark forest the woodrangers planned their revenge. They might be beaten back, but at least they would take some toll from those yelling, triumphant savages, who were glutting their ferocity by torturing and burning their prisoners.

Du Lhut and De Chavanne led the way; they hastened with all possible speed along the forest paths. The *coureurs de bois* followed close behind their leaders. With glances eager and intent, their eyes searched the thickets. When they came near to the village, they crouched in the bushes or hid behind the big trees.

The Indians had dragged their captives outside the village. The wailing moans of little children, bereft of father and mother, were mingled with the hoarse cries of the savages, who, drunken with brandy, were yelling and dancing. The wretched prisoners, haggard men and pale-faced women, were huddled together. Little children hid behind broad-shouldered *coureurs de bois*, whose faces twisted pitifully in an effort to keep back the tears, as they thought of the dreadful fate in store for their little ones. Scattered everywhere were the bodies of men, women, and children — outstretched, motionless bodies.

The Frenchmen could not rush upon the savages and destroy them, for the coureurs de bois were but a handful against so many Mohawks. All they could hope to do was to snatch the prisoners from the Indians, and then retreat as quickly as possible.

"The priests say that it is wicked for us to sell brandy to the Indians," whispered Du Lhut, "but the redskins' love for the fire water will be the salvation of a good many men, women, and children today."

"That's true," replied De Chavanne. "Look at those young braves over there. They're too drunk either to fight or to run away."

Some of the woodrangers, who had been appointed to set the captives free, crouched in the underbrush just a few feet away from a young Frenchman by the name of Paul Ravanne. This lad, bound hand and foot, had been thrown to one side by his Indian captor.

"Hiss-st!"

At the sound, Ravanne slowly turned his head and looked searchingly at the thickets. He could see no one. Again that warning whisper came to his ears, and he knew that friends were near. He moved over, little by little, until he was so close that one of the woodrangers was able to reach through and cut the deerskin thongs which bound Ravanne's wrists and ankles.

"Can you give me a knife?" he whispered.

For reply, a knife was pushed along until it lay close

to his hand. The savages were making so much noise, that, unheard by them, Ravanne called softly to a young Frenchman, and told him the joyful news that he was free and armed.

"If only I had a knife!" his friend muttered. "Can you get me one?"

"Push another knife through," called Ravanne softly.

Another knife found its way into Ravanne's hands, and he began to edge over toward the other captive. The young man moved his body but a few inches at a time for fear he would attract the attention of some cunning redskin.

When Ravanne got close to his friend, he cut the bonds, gave him a knife, and whispered to him to free as many of the captives as were within his reach. Working together, thus, the two managed to cut the bonds of all the captives, who, fortified by hope, were wonderfully changed from the miserable, despairing beings of a few moments before.

As Ravanne moved among the captives, he whispered to the women and children to creep over to the edge of the wood, so that they might escape into the forest.

The moving about of the little children, who had been left unbound, wasn't noticed by the redskins. Before they made the slightest movement, the women took good care that the savages weren't looking.

"Jean," Du Lhut called softly to a little boy who was crouching close to the big trees which Du Lhut had selected for his hiding place. "Put these knives in the bosom of your shirt and give them to Ravanne. Be careful not to let the redskins see you."

From earliest childhood Jean had heard stories, not only about the cunning of the Iroquois, but also about the cunning of the *coureurs de bois* in outwitting them. He now played his part so successfully that in a few minutes the knives were in Ravanne's hands for distribution. When Jean returned to the big tree, each captive had a knife in his hand.

The young Mohawk chief who had captured Ravanne was one of the few who preferred the spoils of war to brandy. He now came from out the palisaded enclosure with his arms full of plunder. He threw the loot down on the ground, and, as he turned to go back, he thought of his captive whom he had thrown, a helpless bundle, against the thickets. One look told him that his prisoner was gone. His lightning glance at the captives brought them to their feet, and the Mohawk, shrieking his war cry, sprang forward with upraised tomahawk.

With answering war whoops the fierce Mohawks came running and leaping, firing their guns as they ran. More than plunder from the burning cabins they valued their captives, for without them, the warriors' triumphal home-coming would be shorn of half its glory.

As the woodrangers sprang out to help their friends, women and children fled past them into the forest. As they fled from the shelter of one thicket to another, mothers called to their children, and children called to one another, so that they might not be separated.

The captive Frenchmen, freed of their bonds, sought the shelter of the big trees, while the *coureurs de bois*, under the leadership of Du Lhut and De Chavanne, met the oncoming savages with a volley from their guns. Fighting every foot of the way, the woodrangers retreated slowly, before their savage foes. Each forest tree now sheltered either a redskin or a Frenchman.

It would have been a hopeless struggle, had it not been for the paralyzing effect of the liquor which the savages had drunk. In a hand-to-hand struggle, this counted mightily against the redskins.

Du Lhut and De Chavanne were determined that none of their followers should be captured by these terrible savages, for they knew that anyone who now fell into the hands of the Indians would be made to suffer tenfold because of the loss of the other captives. As they shouted encouragement to their men, the two brave leaders wielded knife and tomahawk with telling effect. They killed many of the Mohawk warriors, who were trying their best to capture some of these brave Frenchmen, that they might have some captives to carry back to their villages.



CHAPTER XXIX

LITTLE RED SAVAGE TAKES THE TRAIL FOR THE COUNTRY OF THE ONONDAGAS

THE coureurs de bois retreated in good order toward the seigniory of Sieur de Casson. Henri Bair carried Adele in his arms. Her frightful experience with the savages had left her almost lifeless. A slight sound came to Antoine's ears—a sound that caused him to stop suddenly and draw Achille and Scandawatti close to his side. Listening intently, the three crouched near a thicket. Suddenly, a dreadful cry, a long quavering war whoop sounded so close to them that Antoine took the two boys into his arms and started on a run through the forest as he called to Henri Bair, "We must take this short cut." They were now close to the seigniory of Sieur de Casson. They could hear the whistling bullets, and the sound of Du Lhut's cries of encouragement to his men, who were driving back the savages.

When they reached the clearing, they found themselves in the midst of a panic-stricken crowd of pale-faced women and crying children. Those were fleeing

from the savages, whose shrill war whoops sounded in their ears.

So soon as Bair and Antoine had reached the shelter of the stockade, they placed the children in the care of old Jean. Then, taking only enough time to load their guns, they ran out to the assistance of the hard-pressed woodrangers.

"Run for it, friends," shouted Du Lhut, when the last of the wounded had been dragged through the gate of the stockade. At his command the woodrangers rushed from the shelter of tree and thicket, and, as they ran, they turned to give battle to the redskins who came leaping after them.

Redskins grappled with Frenchmen and tightly clenched bodies swayed to and fro. There were cuts and thrusts with knife and tomahawk. The Indians swarmed to the very gate of the stockade, and hacked madly at the wooden barrier which stood between them and their prey.

Repulsed and baffled, the Mohawks withdrew. They yelled defiance as they sought the cover of the woods to escape the bullets that were being fired through the loopholes of the stockade.

"Where is De Montigny?" shouted De Chavanne. "It's strange he's made no use of the cannon. Aren't they in working order?"

"Yes, they're loaded and ready to fire," said one of the servants, who was standing near.

"De Montigny! De Montigny!" The cry was taken up and carried from one person to the other until it reached the far end of the village.

"Train the cannon on that thicket," shouted Du Lhut, as he pointed to a clump of underbrush at the edge of the wood. A steady firing of well-aimed shots from that direction told him that experienced Mohawk warriors were hiding there.

When the cannon roared, the wild cries of leaping redskins showed that the shower of shrapnel had not been wasted.

"Give 'em another dose of lead," shouted Du Lhut, as he ran to the manor house to look for De Montigny, whose absence made him fear that his friend had been killed by the savages.

"Where is De Montigny?" he shouted to old Jean, who had been in every room in the house in search of François.

"I don't know. I've not seen him for nearly two hours. I'm afraid he's been carried off by the redskins."

"Sieur Du Lhut! Sieur Du Lhut!" The cry was insistent.

"Yes, here I am. What do you want?" asked Du Lhut, as Jean Laut hurried towards him.

"Leaping Deer, the young Onondaga, wants to speak to you. He's come forward, unarmed, and declares that he brings a message from Chief Illiol."



"The Indians had dragged their captives outside the village."

The gate of the stockade was hastily unbarred, and Du Lhut strode forward.

"So this is the way the Iroquois keep their peace pact with the French!" he cried sternly.

"Chief Illiol said to tell The Great White Chief that a few Senecas and the Mohawks belonging to the Clan of the Bear are the ones now making the attacks on the French settlements. As you know, they refused to join in the treaty of peace with the French. The rest of the Mohawks, and the other tribes of the Iroquois League, are not taking part in these attacks. But Chief Illiol asks you to give up Scandawatti, for he fears the French will wreak their vengeance on him."

"Of late," said Sieur Du Lhut, "I have often wished that the little Onondaga were safe among his own people. But, since he is a hostage in our hands, it seems to me that it would be only fair for you to give up a French prisoner in exchange for him."

"I have brought one to exchange for him," and a fleeting smile lighted up the face of Leaping Deer. He turned toward the forest, and gave a cry that brought a young redskin to the edge of the wood.

"Bring my prisoner here," he shouted.

The Iroquois disappeared into the wood, and reappeared in a few moments with a young Frenchman.

"François de Montigny!" exclaimed Du Lhut. "How did you fall into the hands of these redskins?"

"I saw some canoes coming up the river, and when

I went out to hail them, I was captured by Leaping Deer," answered François.

"You agree, then, to the exchange?" asked Leaping Deer.

"Willingly," replied Du Lhut.

"Antoine!" he shouted.

In answer to this call Antoine appeared outside the gate.

"Bring the little Onondaga here. I'm going to exchange him for François."

When Antoine came out, leading Little Red Savage, Little White Savage slipped out, too. His eyes were wistful. "And shall I never again see Scandawatti?" he asked Leaping Deer, who hurried forward to greet his cousin.

"When there is peace between the French and the Mohawks, The Great White Chief will again bring you to the country of the Onondagas," said Leaping Deer.

"Yes, my brother, then we'll meet again in the village of my people," said Little Red Savage. Then he waved good-bye, as he turned to follow in the footsteps of Leaping Deer.

"It's fortunate, François, that we had the little Onondaga to exchange for you," said Du Lhut, as they entered the stockade. "I shudder to think of the tortures you would have suffered if you had been carried away captive."

"Yes, no doubt I should have been burnt at the stake. How I pity the poor fellows who may have fallen into their hands! Did they take many prisoners?"

"No," answered Antoine. "De Chavanne and I have taken count of the woodrangers, and we find that, while many are wounded, no one is missing."

Du Lhut turned to Achille, who, with eyes downcast and shoulders drooping dejectedly, walked at his side. "Do not look so sorrowful, my little cousin," he said. "When the Mohawks bury the war hatchet, I'll take you with me to the country of the Iroquois."

"We shall always have war with the Mohawks, and I shall never see Scandawatti again. I'm sure of it."

"Never mind worrying about that," said Antoine. "Before many moons, there'll be peace among the French and all the tribes of the Iroquois. Then you'll again be running the woods with the little Onondaga."





